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RSPB

first book of flowers

Anita Ganeri and David Chandler



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Flowers

Flowers are everywhere! When you're out and about, you might have seen bright yellow buttercups or big red poppies.

This book will help you name lots of the wild flowers you can see around you, and tell you where they like to grow. See which ones you can spot. Have a good look at them. But please don't pick them. Leave them where they are. Then other people will be able to enjoy the wild flowers too.

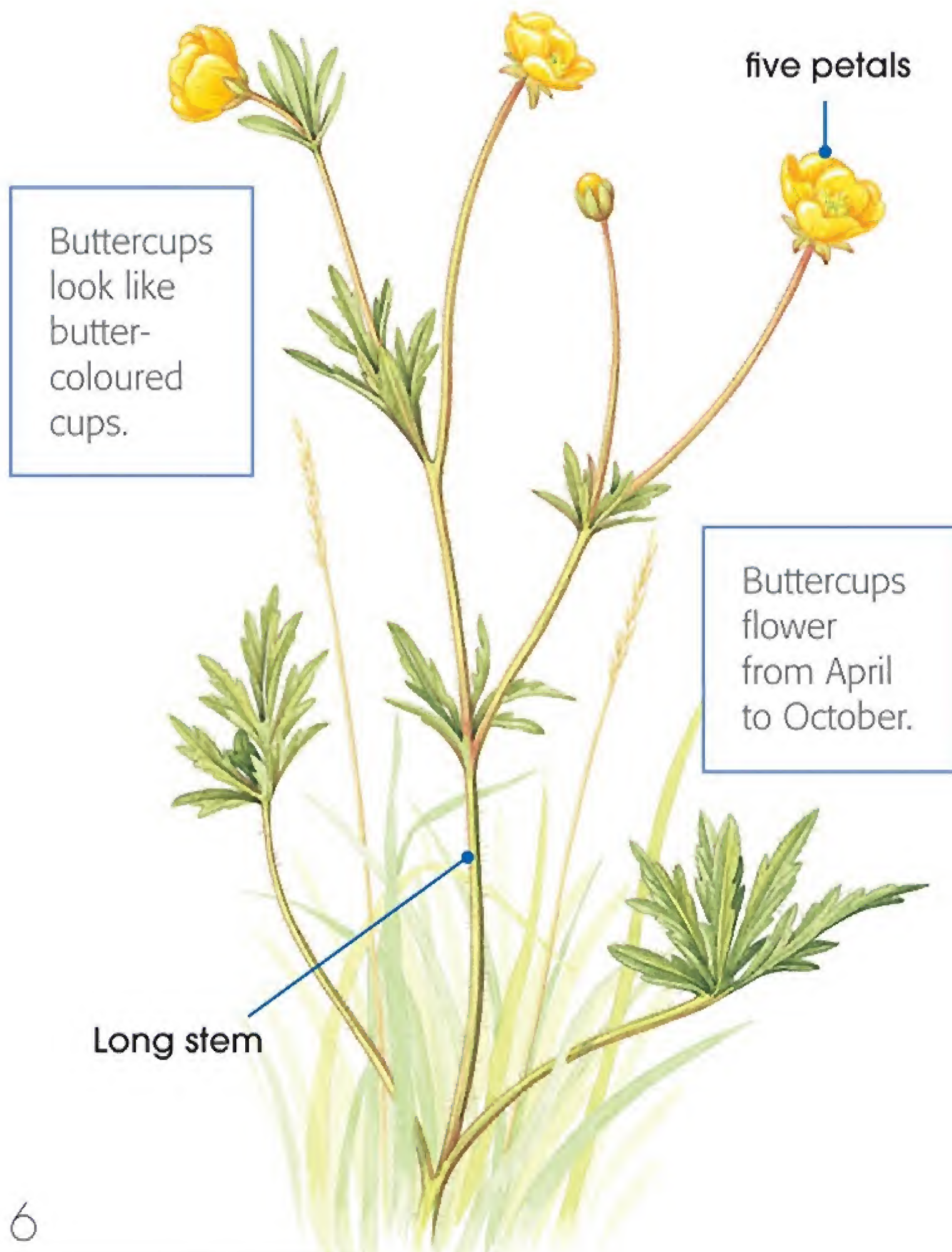
At the back of this book is a Spotter's Guide to help you remember the wild flowers you spot. You could also write down the flowers you see, or draw them.

Happy flower hunting!



Buttercup

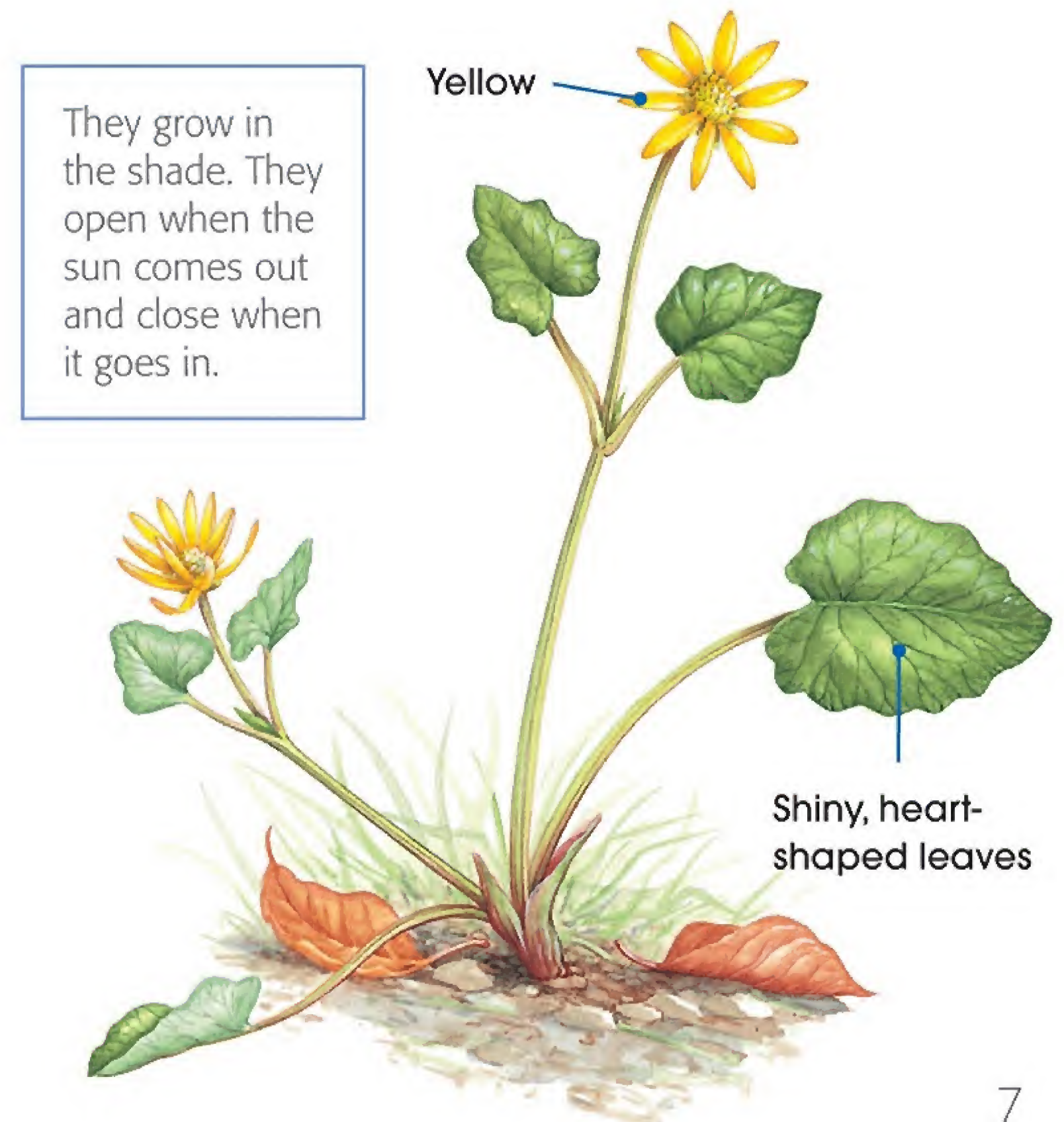
Buttercups have shiny, yellow flowers.
Look for them in grassy places.
Sometimes, there are so many of them
they can make whole fields look yellow!



Lesser celandine

Lesser celandines are
bright yellow but have
more petals than the
buttercup. You can see
them in meadows and
woods, and on grassy banks.

Lesser
celandines
flower from
February to
May.

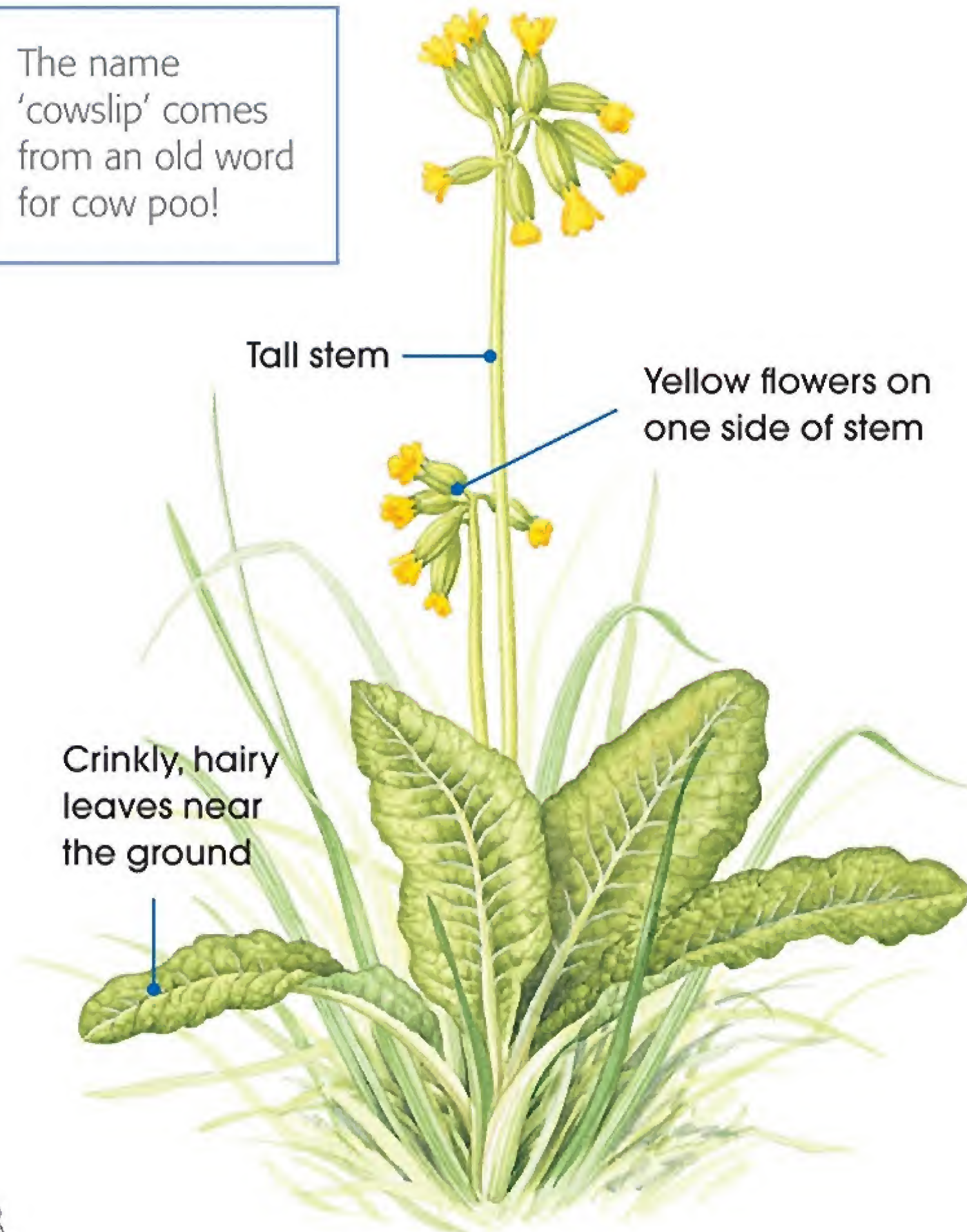




Cowslip

Look for cowslips in April and May. You can find them in grassy places and woods. They have bunches of yellow flowers on tall stems.

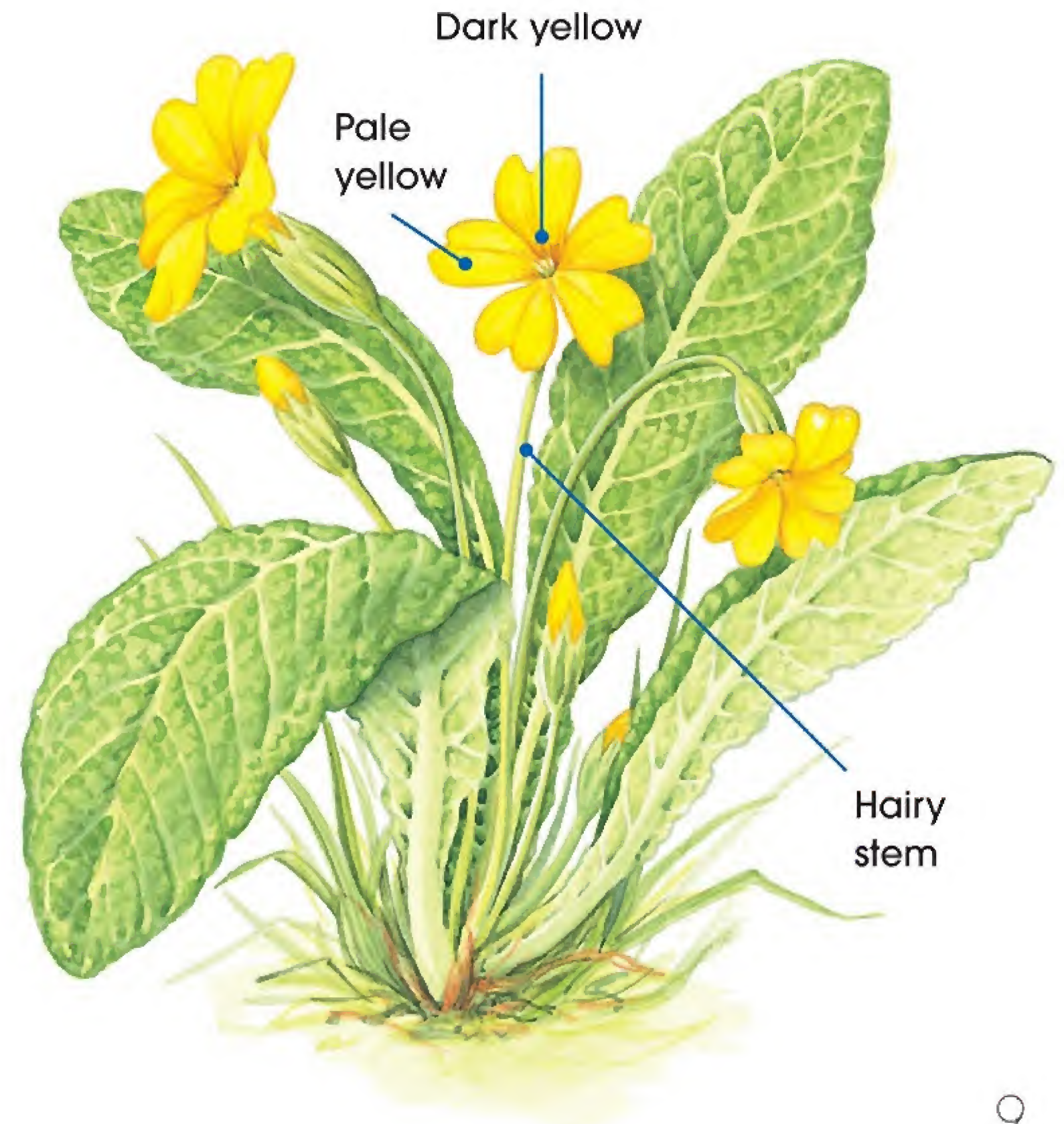
The name 'cowslip' comes from an old word for cow poo!



Primrose

Primroses and cowslips look very similar. However, primroses only grow one flower on each stem. You might see them in woods, hedges and fields.

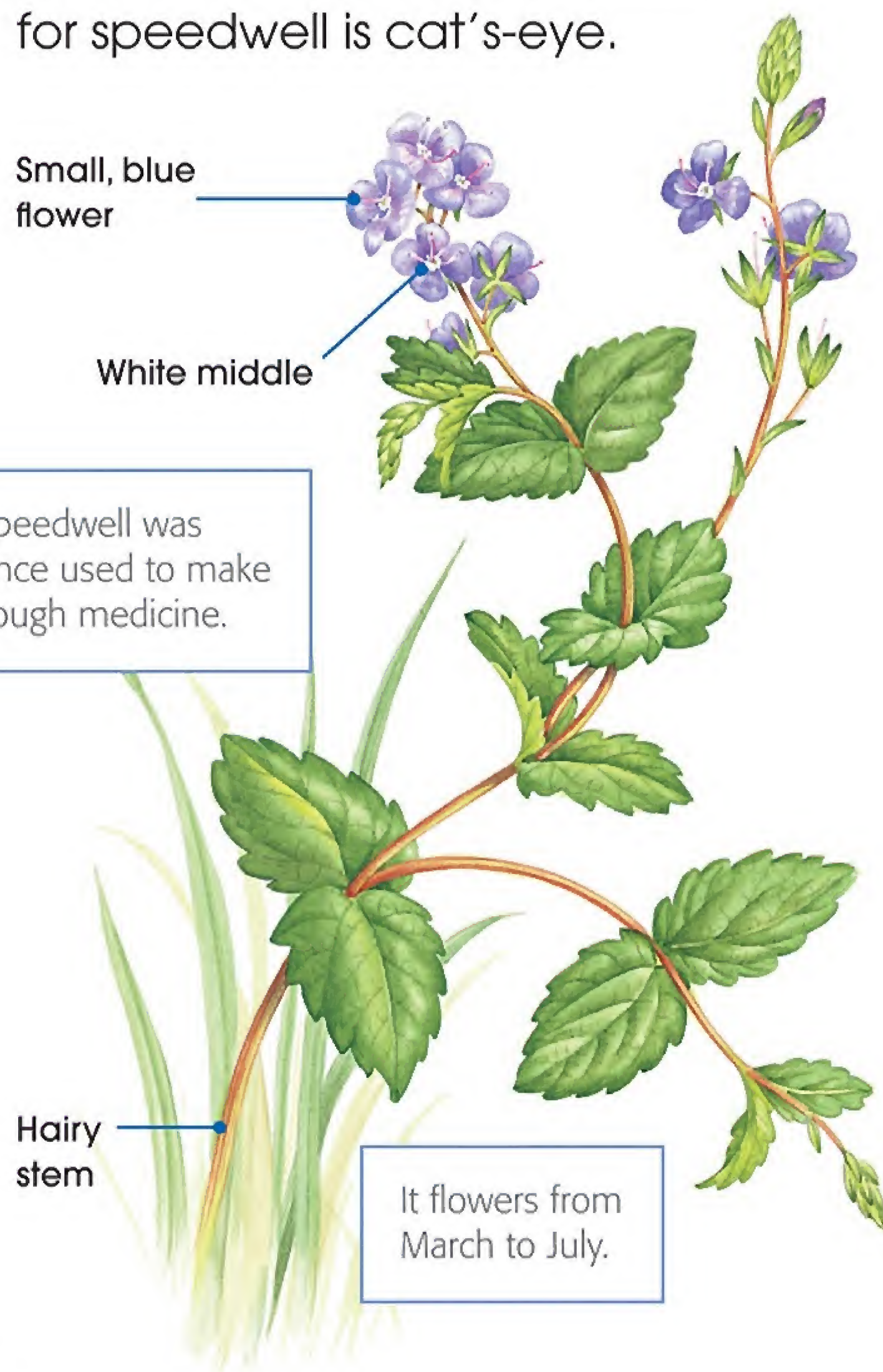
Primroses bloom very early in the year. You will see them from January to June.





Speedwell

Look for this blue flower in grassy places. Another name for speedwell is cat's-eye.



Speedwell was once used to make cough medicine.

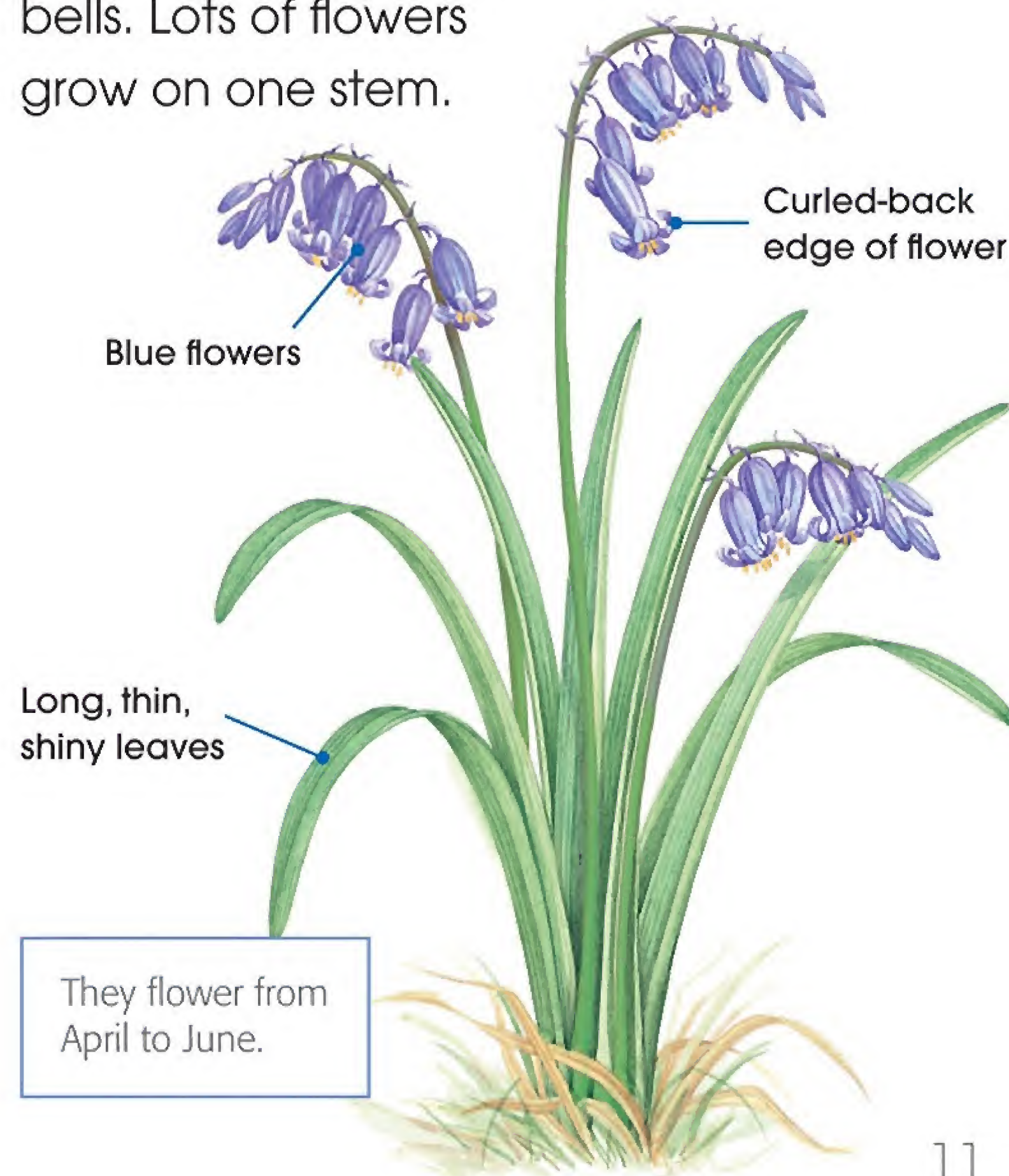
It flowers from March to July.



Bluebell

If you go to a wood or hillside in springtime, you might see lots of blue flowers. These are bluebells. They have flowers that look like tiny bells. Lots of flowers grow on one stem.

Bluebells have a strong, sweet smell.

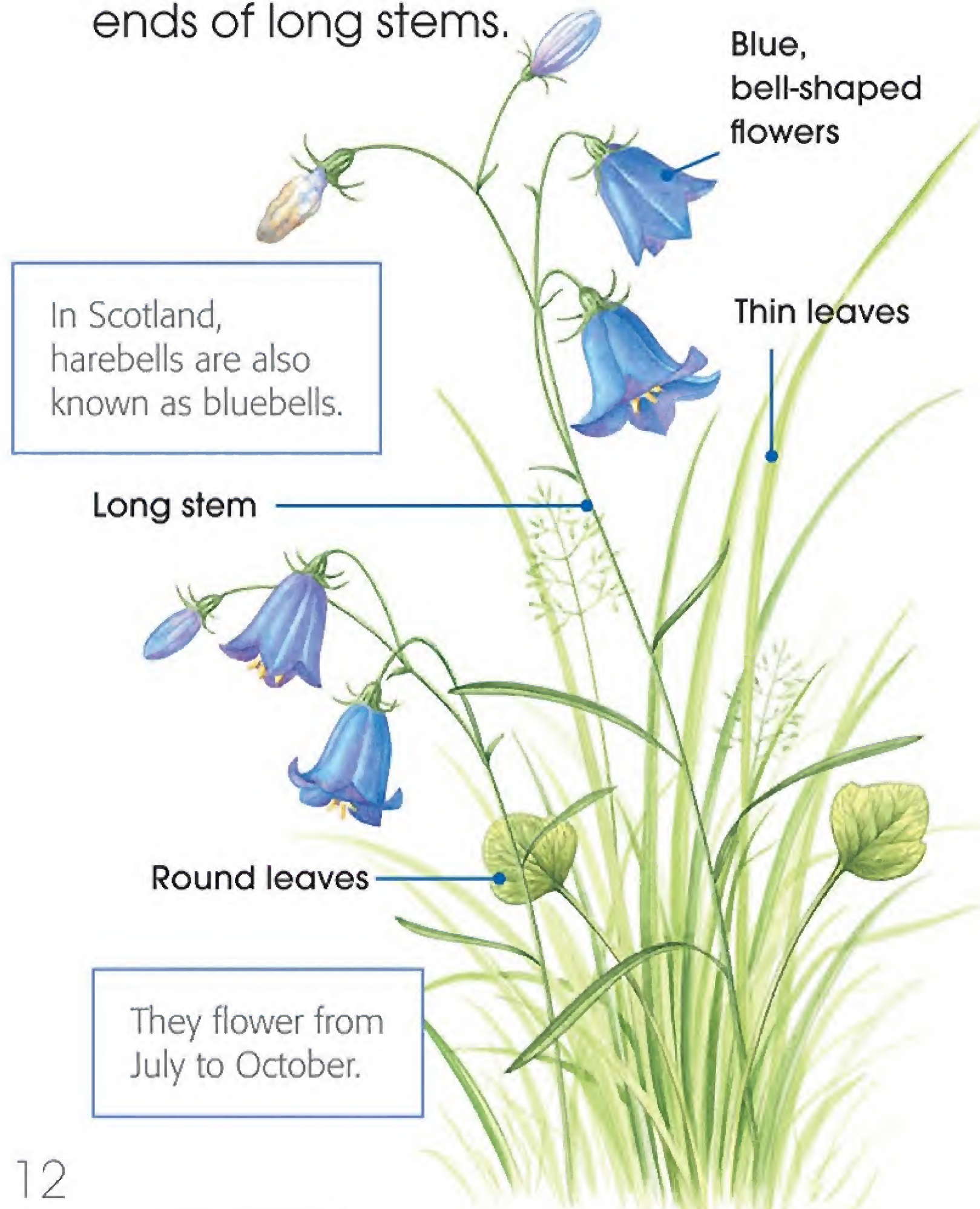


They flower from April to June.



Harebell

You can see harebells in grassy places and on cliffs and sand dunes. A harebell has blue flowers, shaped like bells. The flowers grow at the ends of long stems.



In Scotland, harebells are also known as bluebells.

They flower from July to October.

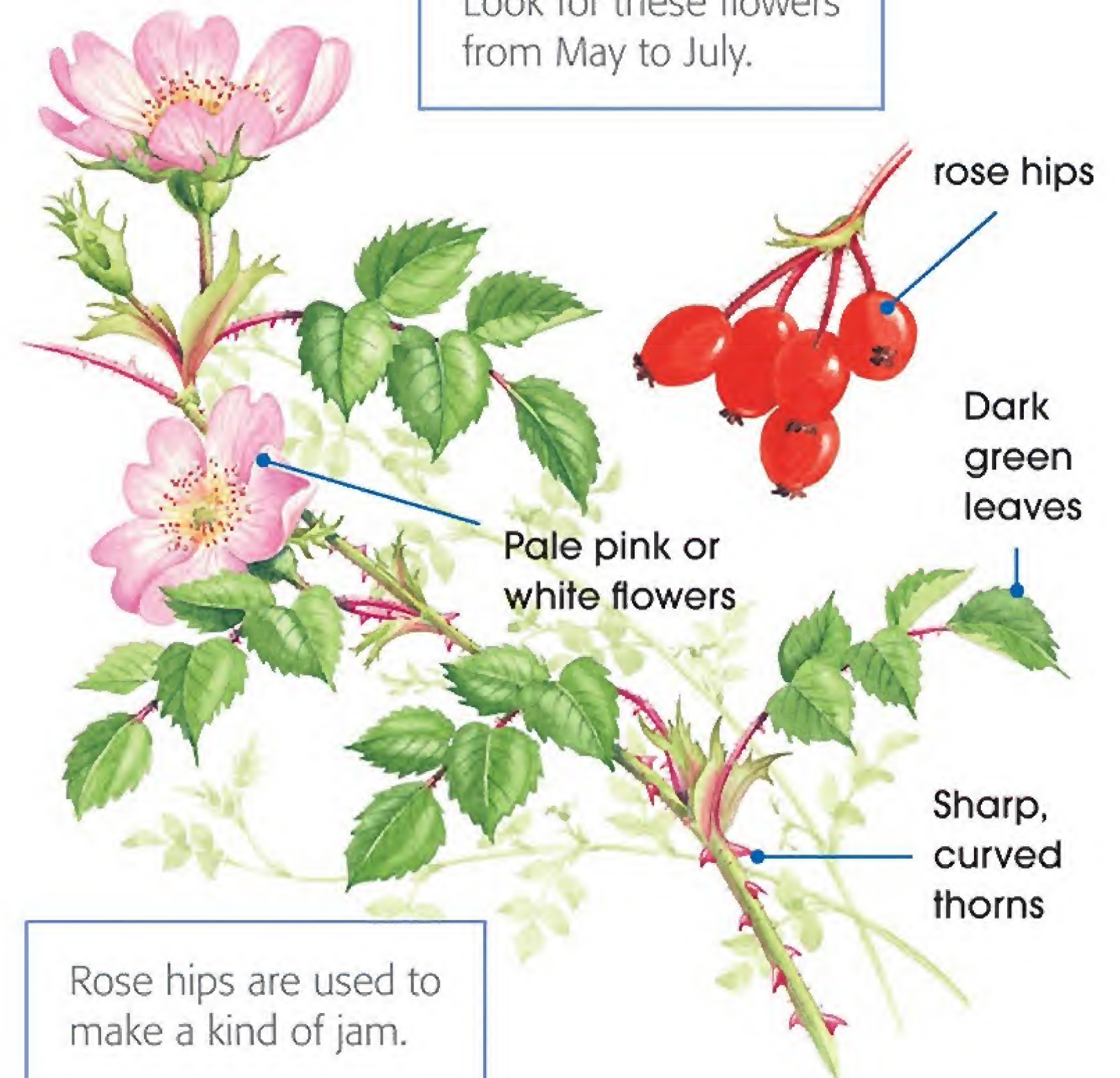


Dog rose

This is a wild rose. It has a thick stem with sharp thorns – watch out! They grow in woods, hedges and bushy areas. The flowers smell sweet.

Dog rose fruits are called rose hips. They are bright orange-red.

Look for these flowers from May to July.



Rose hips are used to make a kind of jam.



Rosebay willowherb

Rosebay willowherb grows by railways, rivers, roads and on wasteland. You can see it in gardens too. Often, you will find lots of it in one place.

Its seeds are light and fluffy. They blow on the breeze. Some people call them fairies.

Dark pink flowers

It flowers from June to September.

Thin pointed leaves

Flower spike



Heather or Ling

Look for heather on moors, bogs and heaths. It grows in clumps near the ground. When it flowers, moors turn purple.

Heather has been used to make sweeping brushes and ropes.

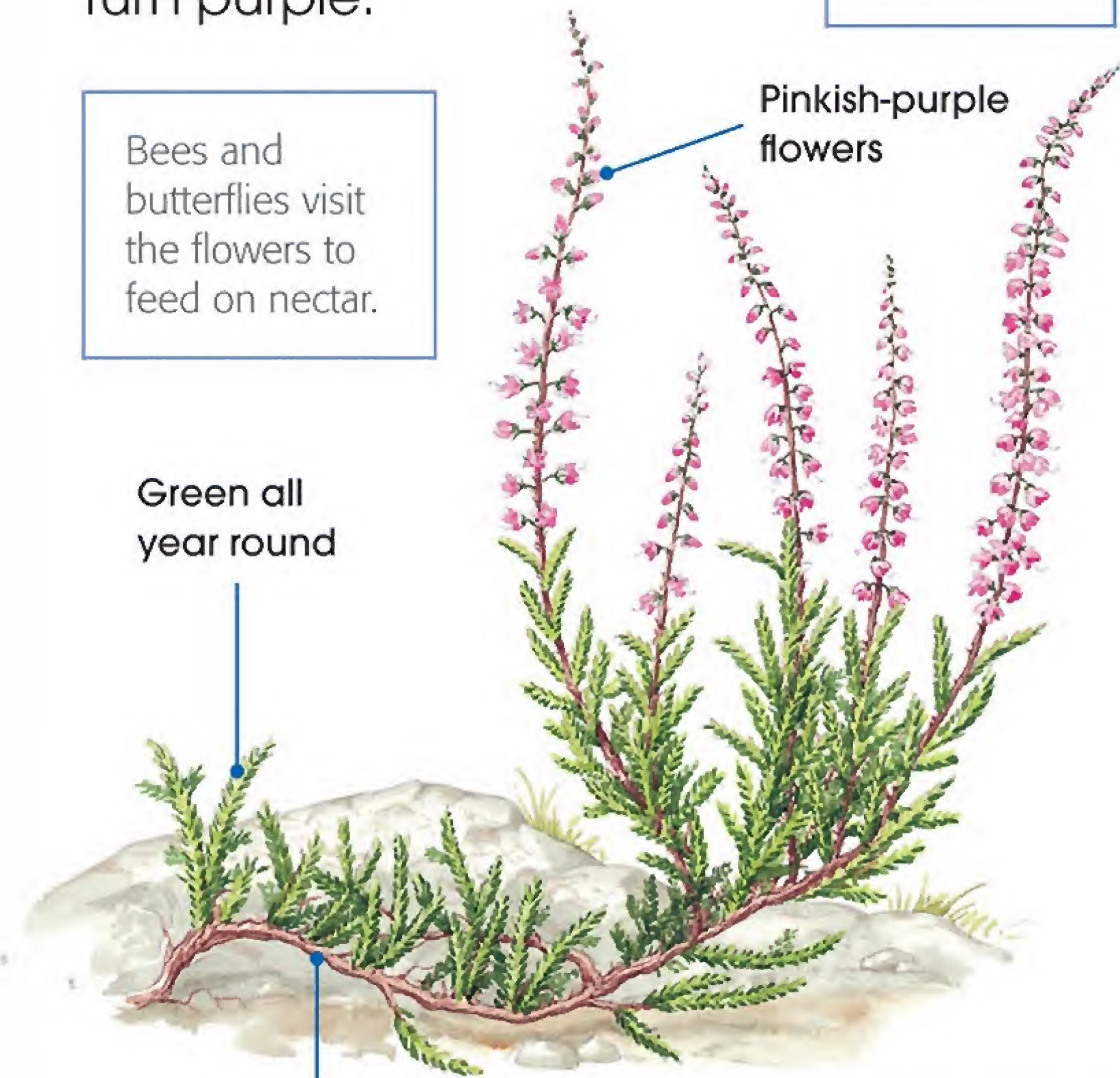
Bees and butterflies visit the flowers to feed on nectar.

Pinkish-purple flowers

Green all year round

Woody stem

It flowers from July to October.





Red campion

Red campion grows in woods, hedgerows and by roads. It often grows in groups. Red campion flowers from March to November.

Bright pink flowers with five petals

You might also see white and pink campions.

Split petals

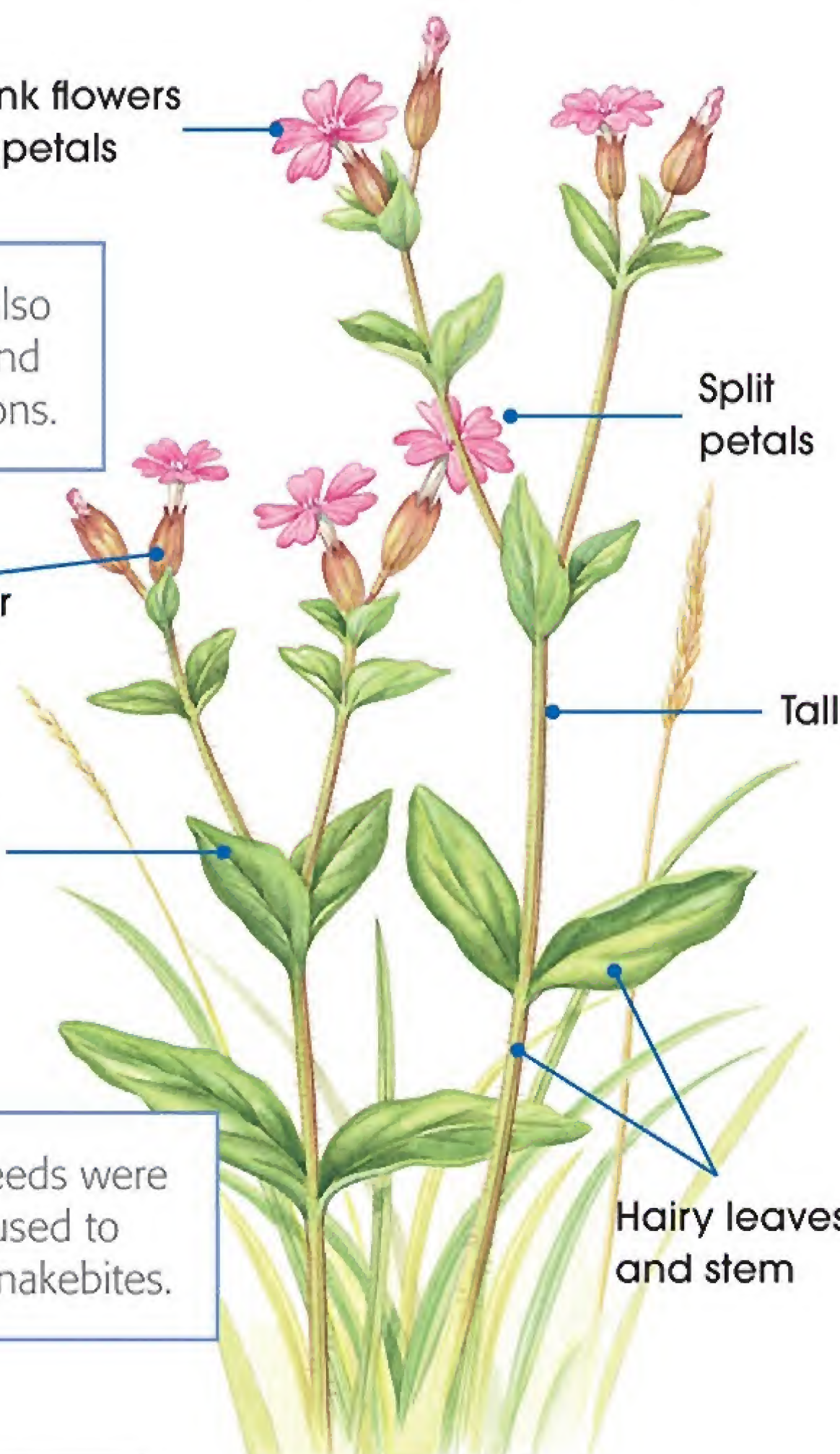
Swollen at base of flower

Pointed leaves

The seeds were once used to treat snakebites.

Hairy leaves and stem

Tall



Foxglove

Foxgloves are tall plants. They have lots of flowers on one stem. The lowest flowers open first. They flower from June to September.

Foxgloves are very poisonous.

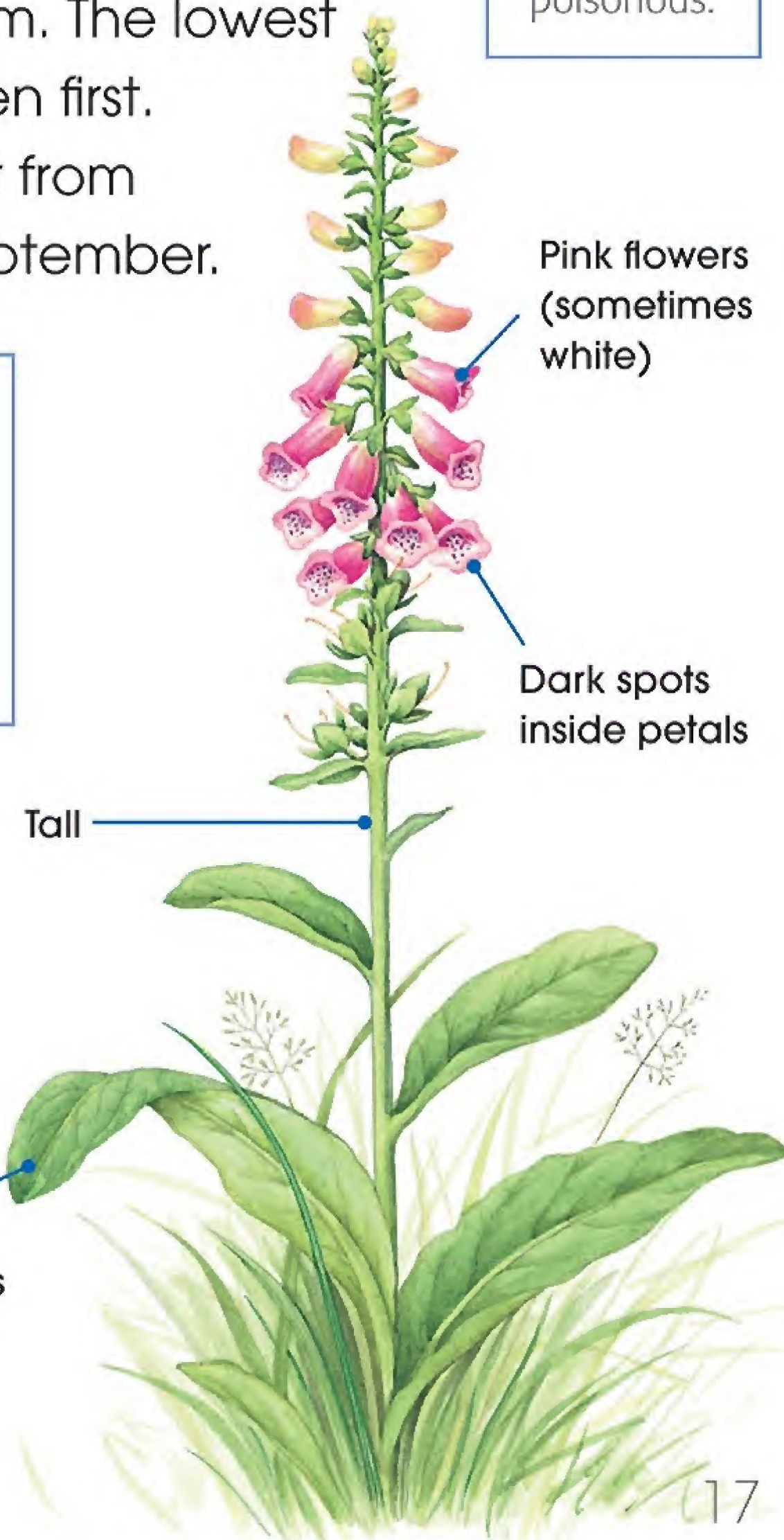
Pink flowers (sometimes white)

Dark spots inside petals

Dark spots inside the flowers guide bees to the nectar.

Tall

Soft, furry leaves



Common vetch

Look for the curly fronds at the end of this plant's stems. They help it to climb. It lives in grassy places and hedgerows.

The common vetch is a type of pea plant.

Curly fronds (called tendrils) for climbing

It flowers between April and September.

Common poppy

A common poppy is easy to spot. Look for a big red flower by the side of the road, or on farmland or wasteland. You can see it from June to October.

After the petals fall off, look for the seed shakers on the end of the stems.

Bright red flower with four petals

Black (not always)

Leaves are spiky and in pairs

One poppy plant can make thousands of seeds.

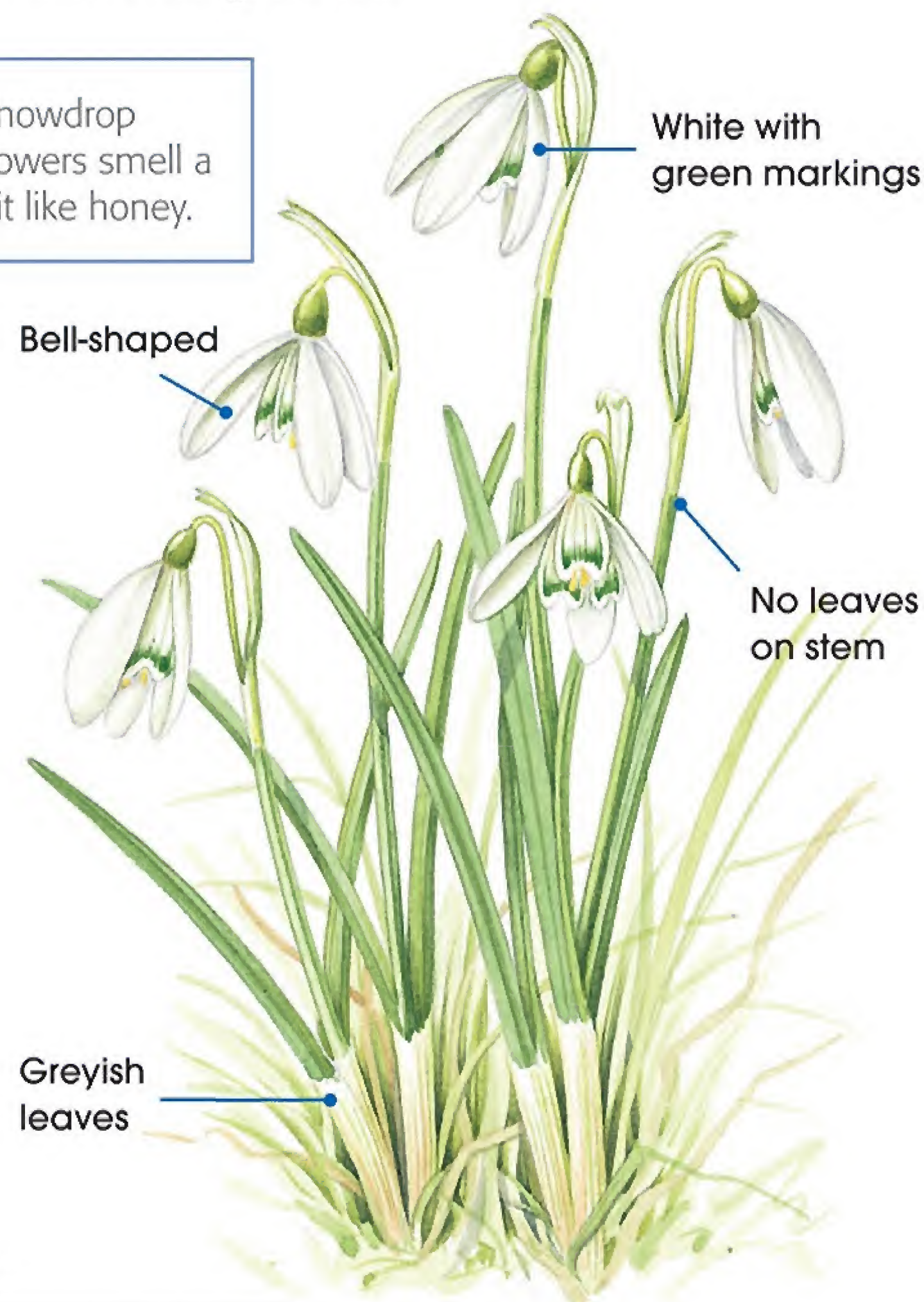
Long and hairy



Snowdrop

Snowdrops bloom early in the year. Look for these white flowers from January to March in woods and hedgerows.

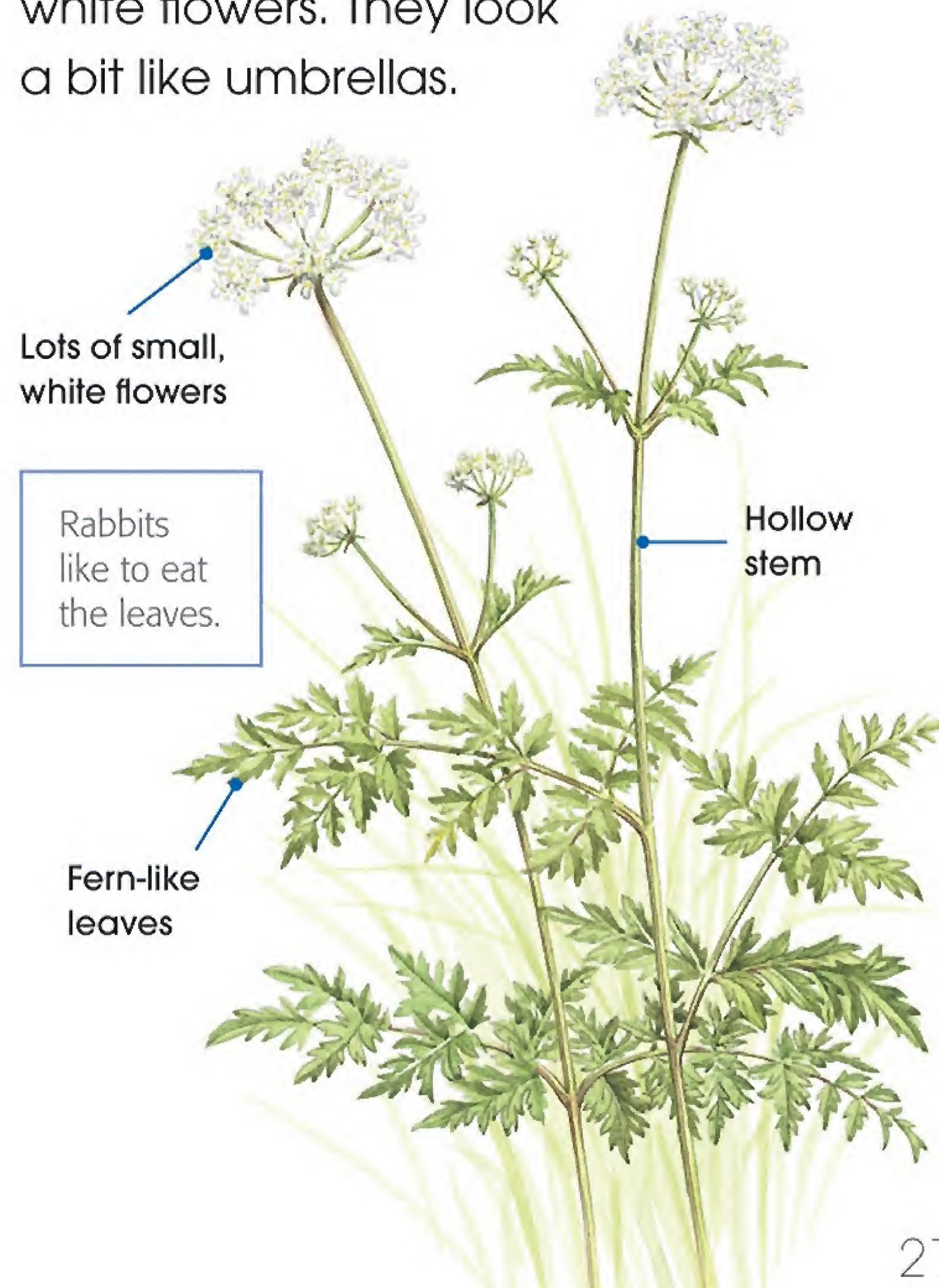
Snowdrop flowers smell a bit like honey.



Cow parsley

You often see cow parsley growing at the side of the road. It has lots of small, white flowers. They look a bit like umbrellas.

Cow parsley flowers from April to June.



Rabbits like to eat the leaves.



White clover

White clover grows in gardens and at the side of the road. The flowers look like soft, white and pink balls. It flowers from May to October. Look for the heart-shaped leaves.

You might also see red clover.

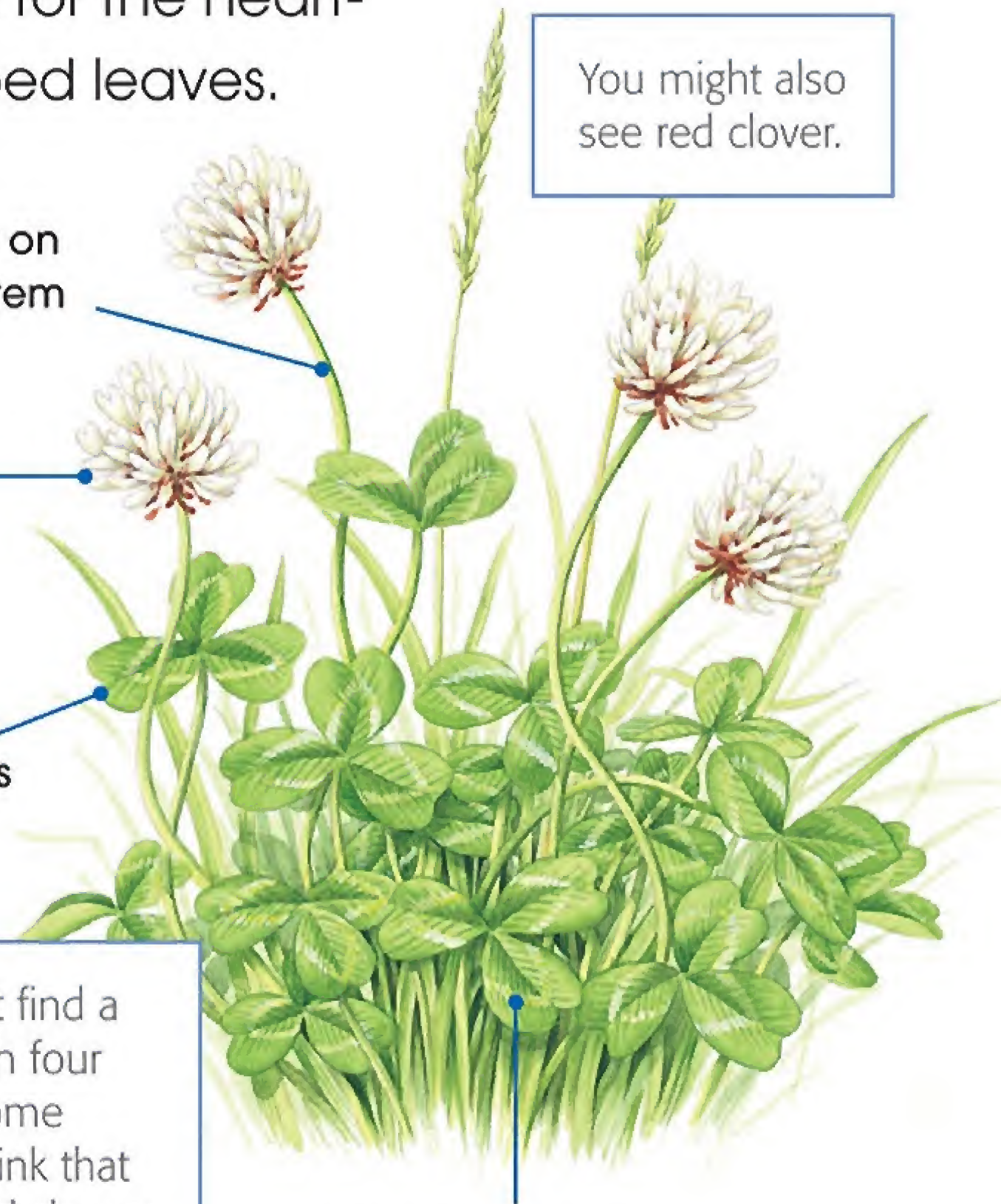
Flower on long stem

White and pinkish

Group of three leaves

You might find a clover with four leaves. Some people think that four-leafed clovers bring them luck.

Heart-shaped leaves



Common daisy

Look for daisies in short grass in gardens and parks. You can see these flowers at any time of the year. They are white with yellow middles.

Daisy flowers open in the daytime and close at night.

Their name probably comes from 'day's-eye'.

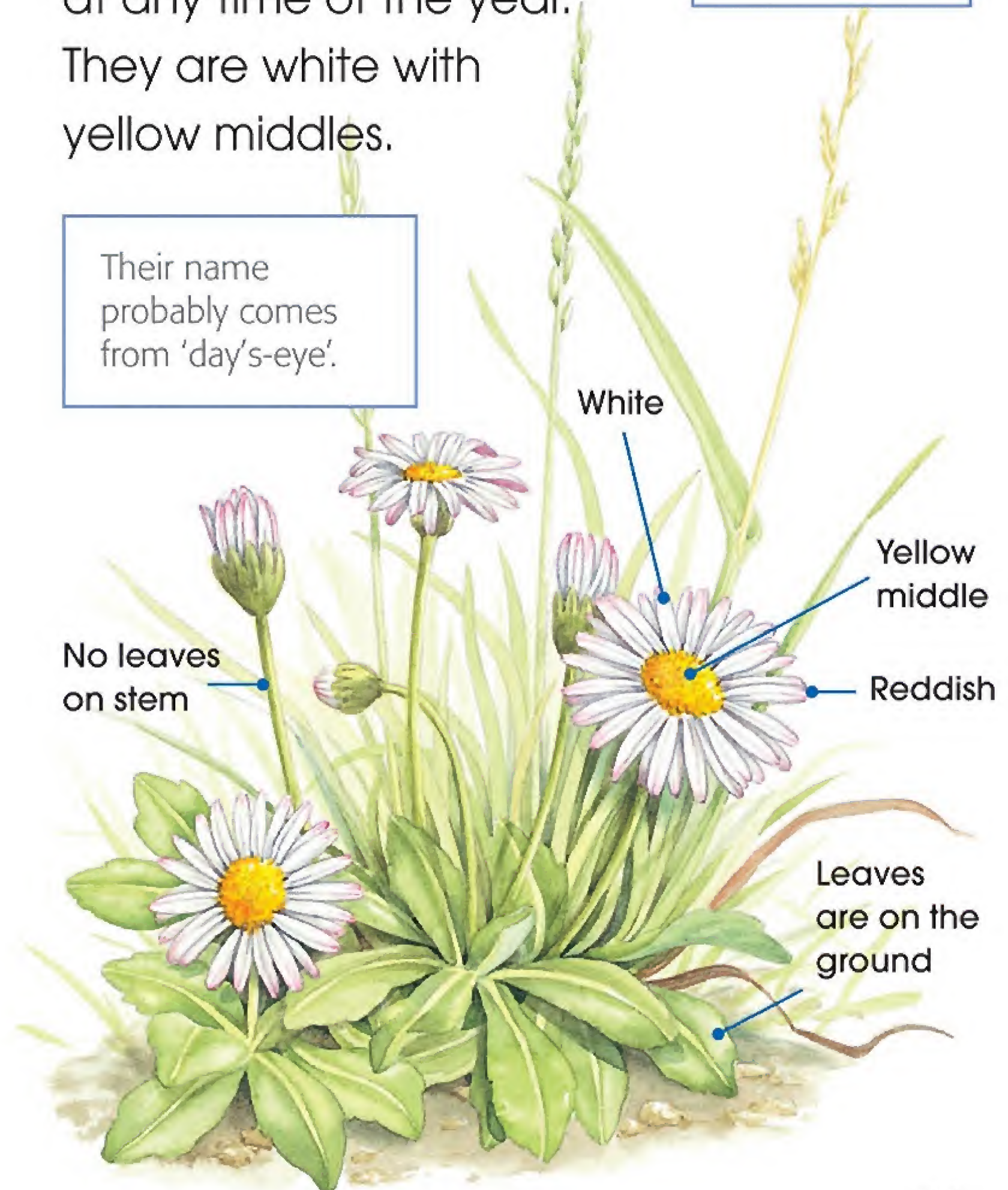
White

Yellow middle

Reddish

No leaves on stem

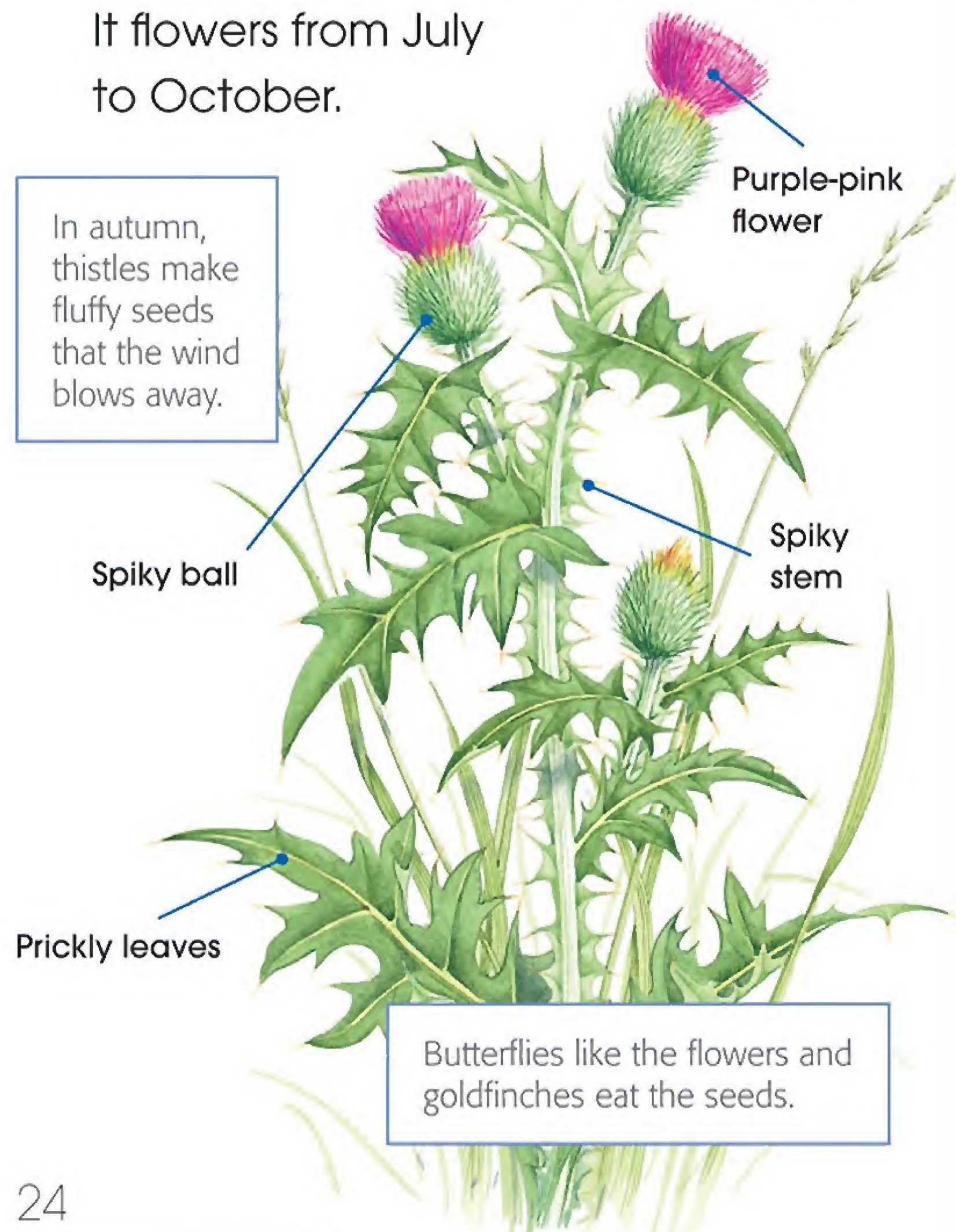
Leaves are on the ground





Spear thistle

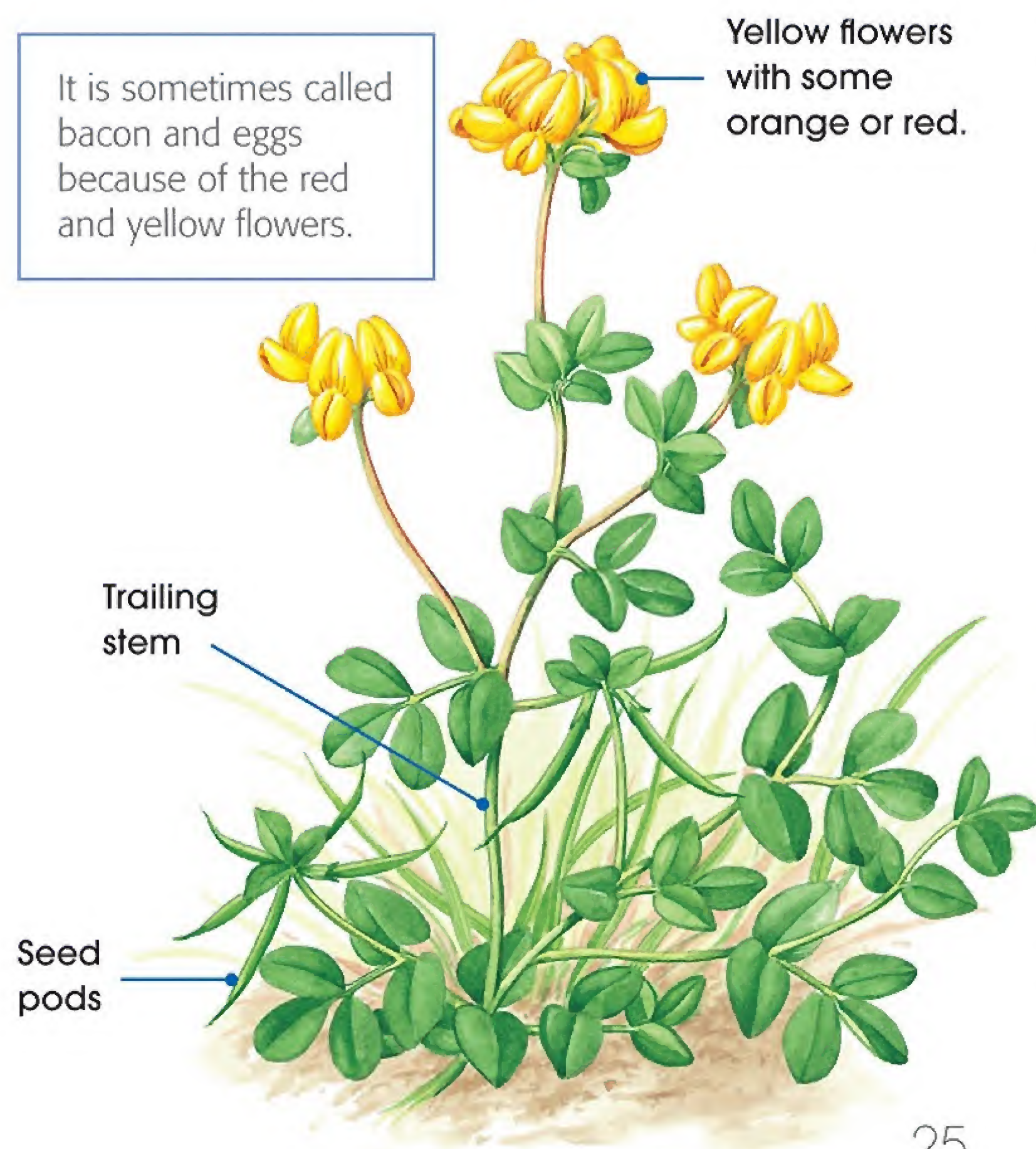
A spear thistle is easy to see. It has lots of spikes – take care! It grows on wasteland and in grassy places. It flowers from July to October.



Bird's-foot trefoil

Bird's-foot trefoil is often found in grass near the sea. It trails along the ground. The seed pods on this plant look like birds' feet.

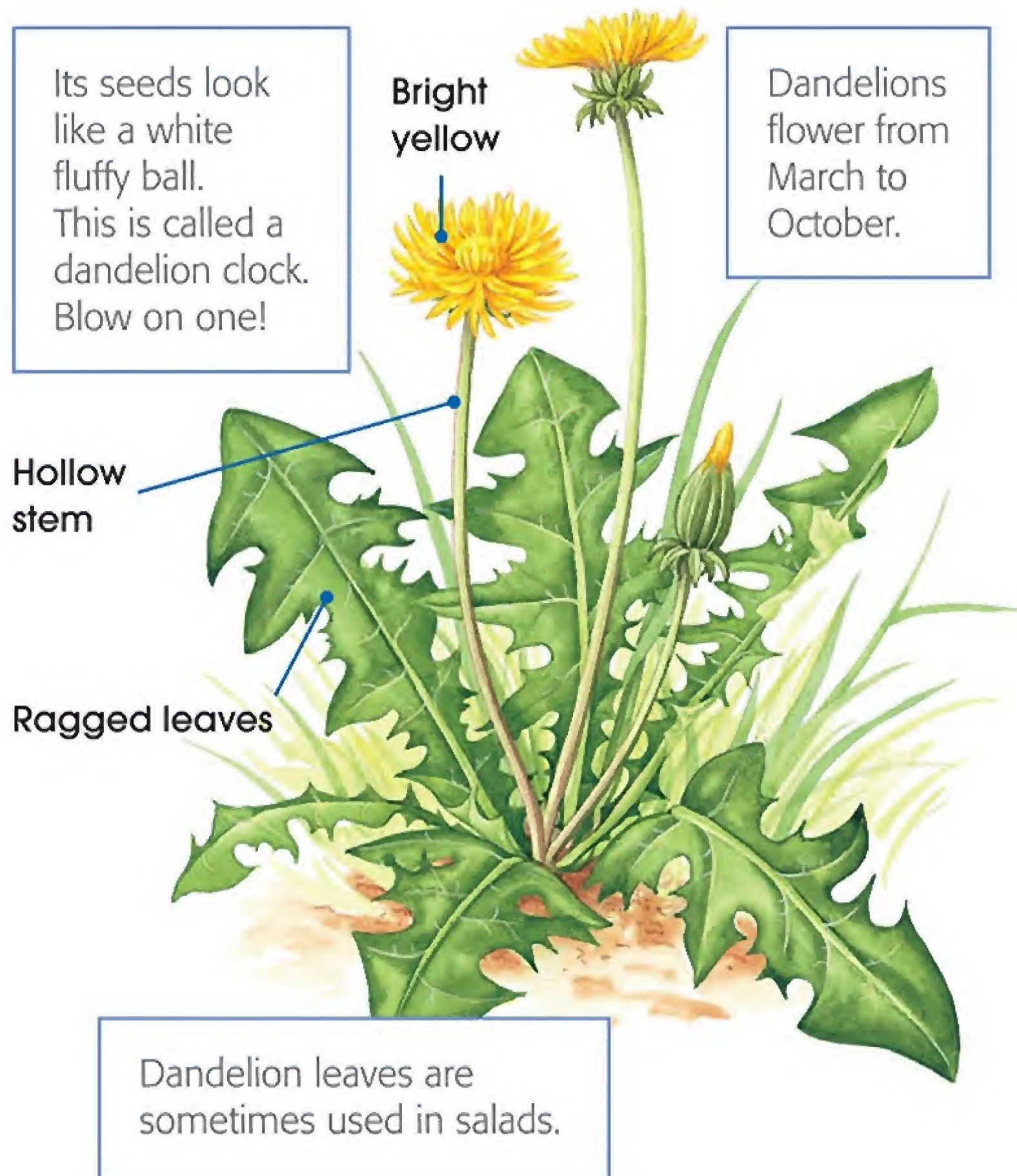
Bird's-foot trefoil flowers from May to September.





Dandelion

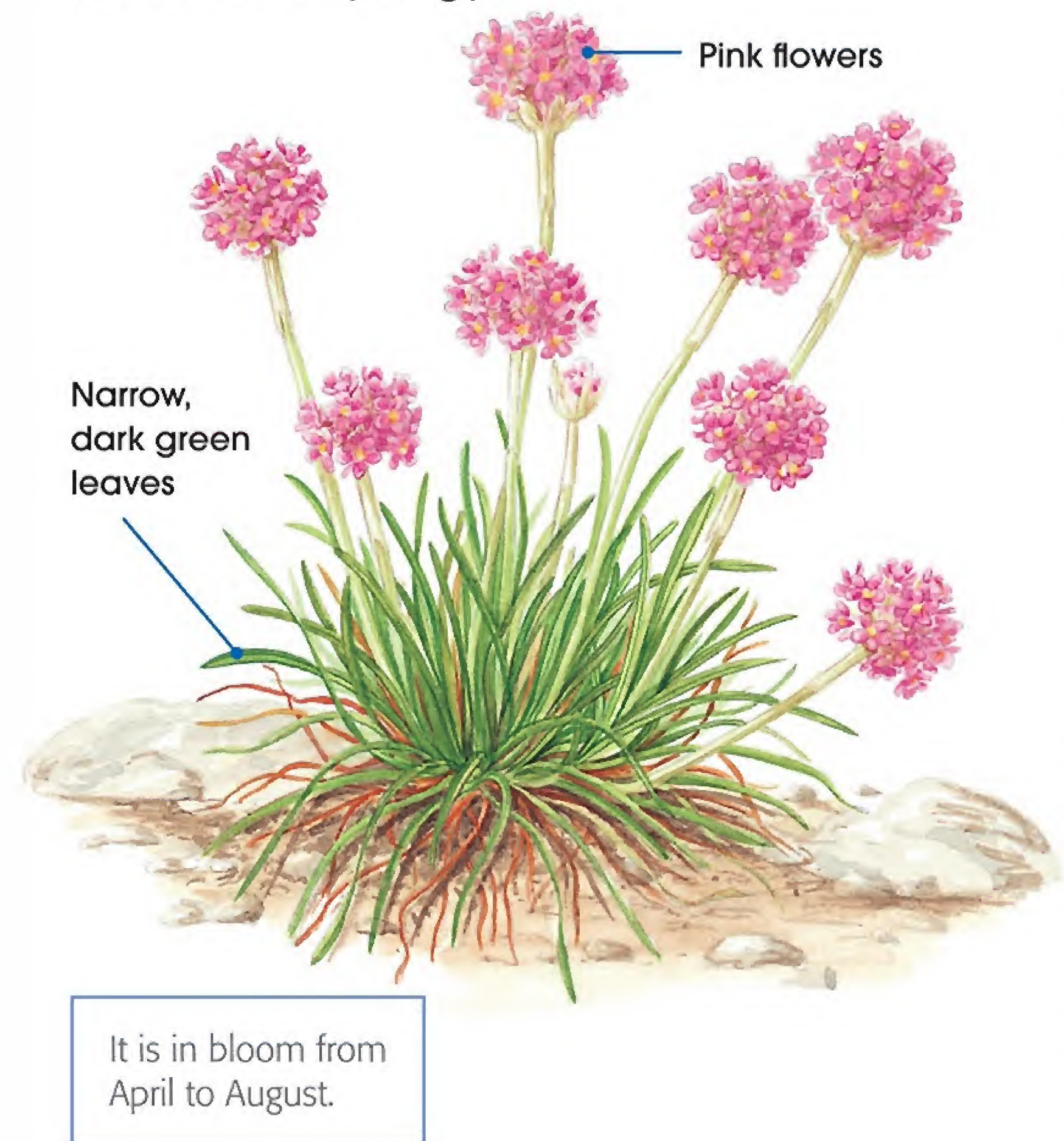
Dandelions grow in gardens, grassy places and on wasteland. The flowers are bright yellow. The stem is hollow. If it breaks, milky juice oozes out.



Thrift

Look for thrift on cliffs by the sea. It has pink flowers and narrow leaves. The leaves feel springy.

Thrift is also called the sea pink.

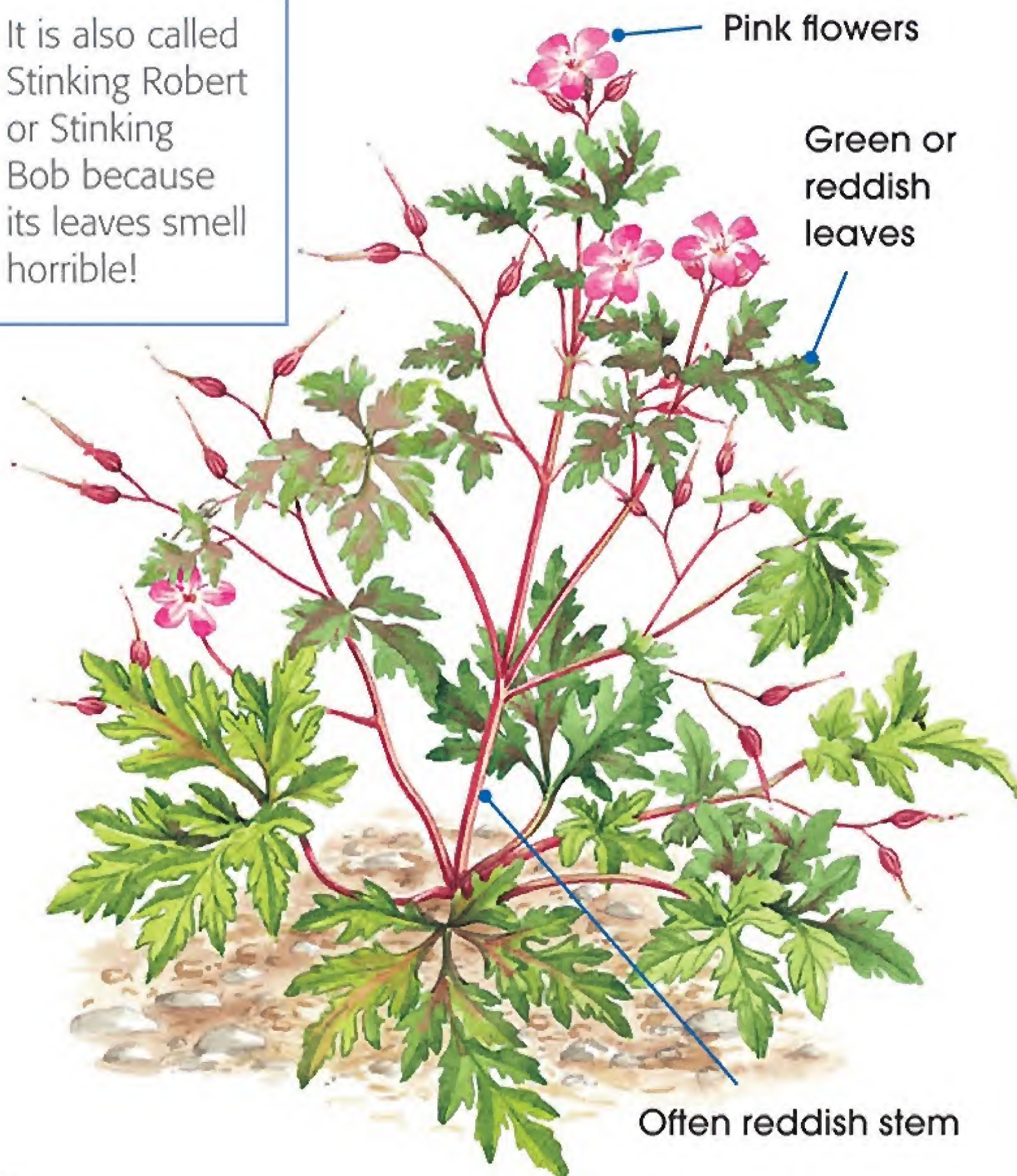




Herb Robert

Herb Robert grows in shady places. You can see its small pink flowers from April to November. Its leaves and stems are often reddish.

It is also called Stinking Robert or Stinking Bob because its leaves smell horrible!



Common mallow

The common mallow is a large plant. You can see common mallows on grassy places and wasteland. They have pink flowers.

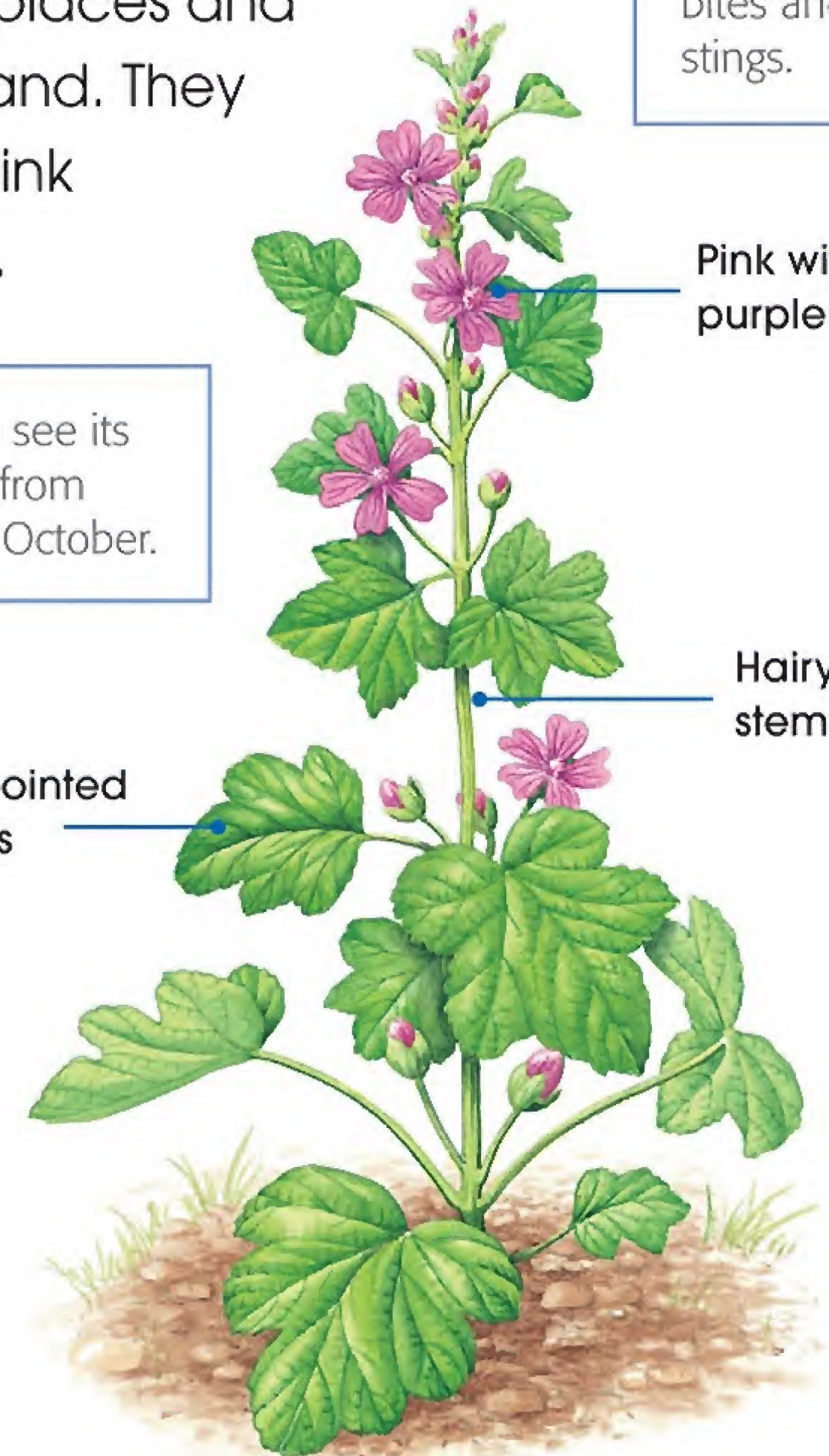
The sticky juice from its leaves is good for bites and stings.

You can see its flowers from June to October.

Five-pointed leaves

Pink with purple stripes

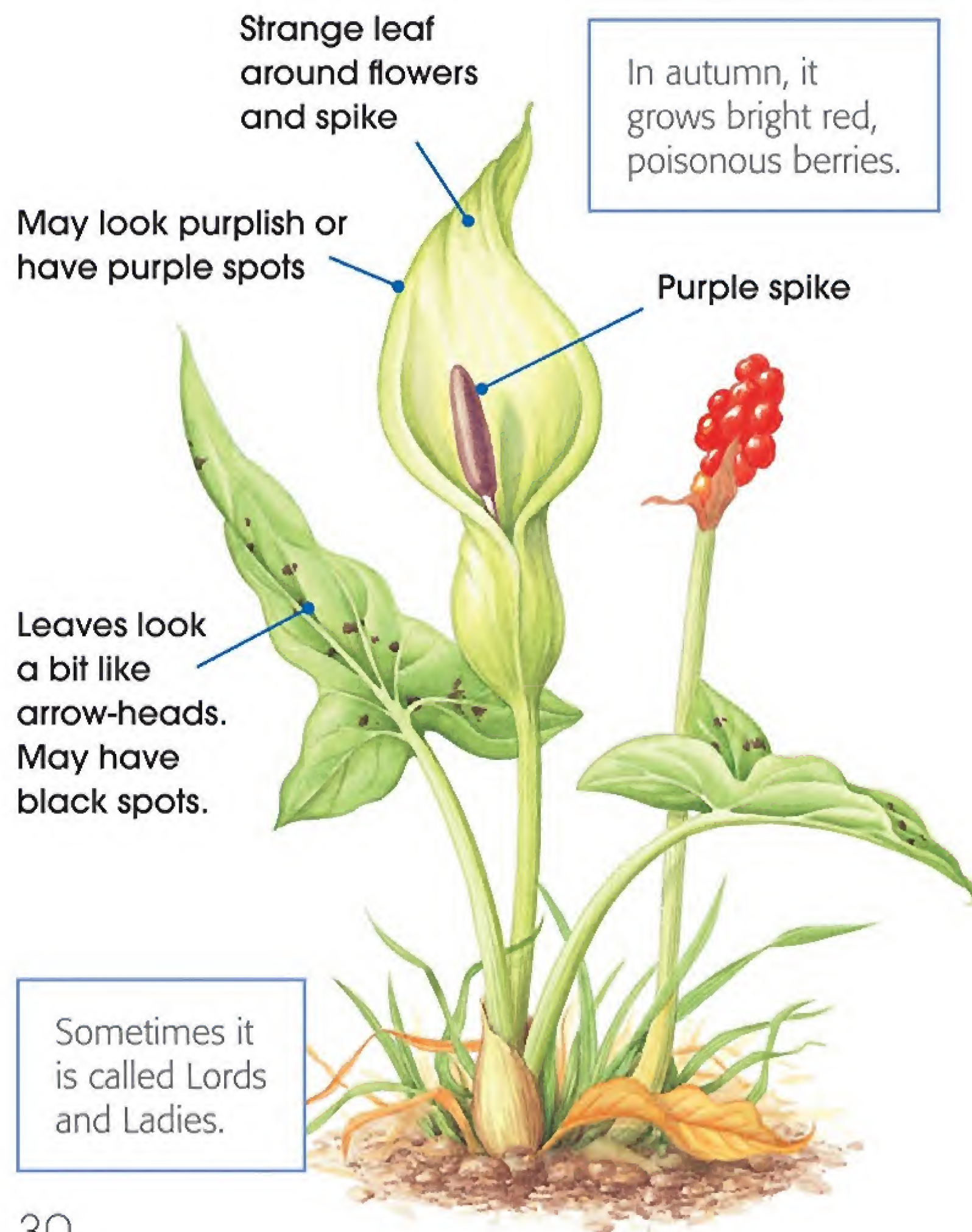
Hairy stem





Cuckoo pint

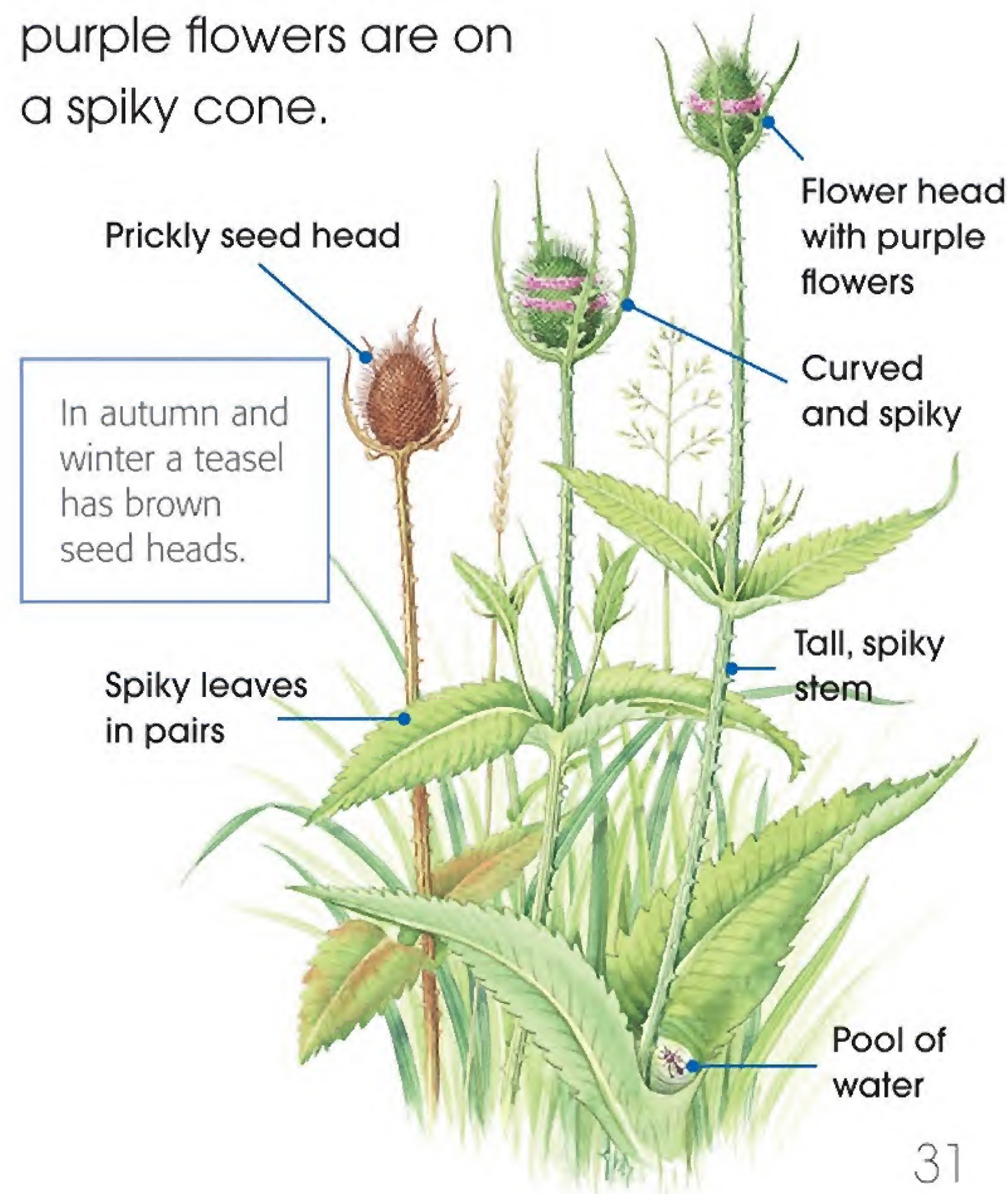
This is a strange-looking plant!
Look for it in woods and hedgerows.
It flowers in April and May.



Teasel

This spiky plant can be taller than a man. Look for it by roads and rivers, in damp grassy places and on wasteland. The purple flowers are on a spiky cone.

Teasel flowers can be seen in July and August.

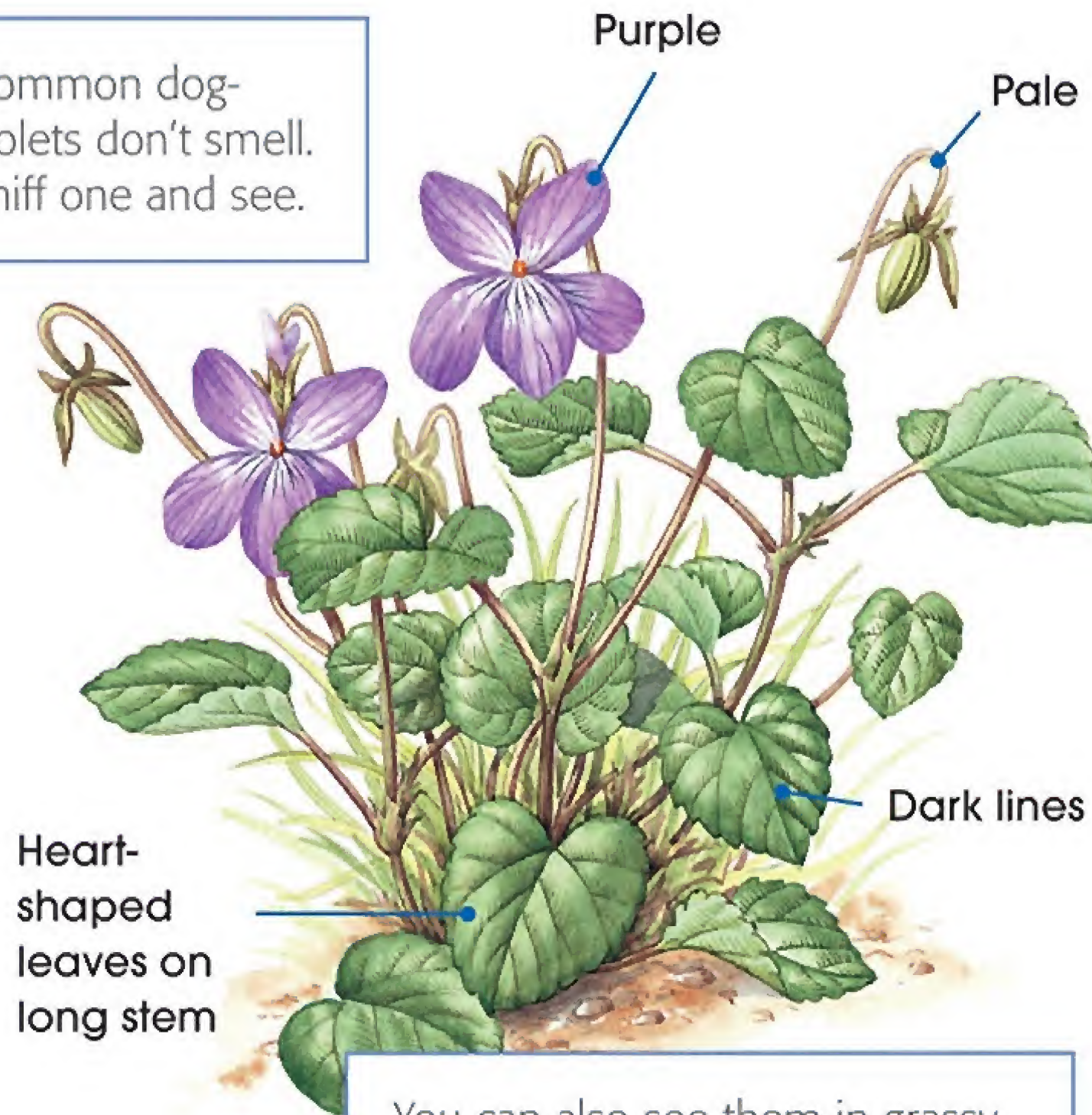




Common dog-violet

If you go to a wood, look for common dog-violets. They are small plants with purple flowers. They are in bloom from March to June.

Common dog-violets don't smell. Sniff one and see.



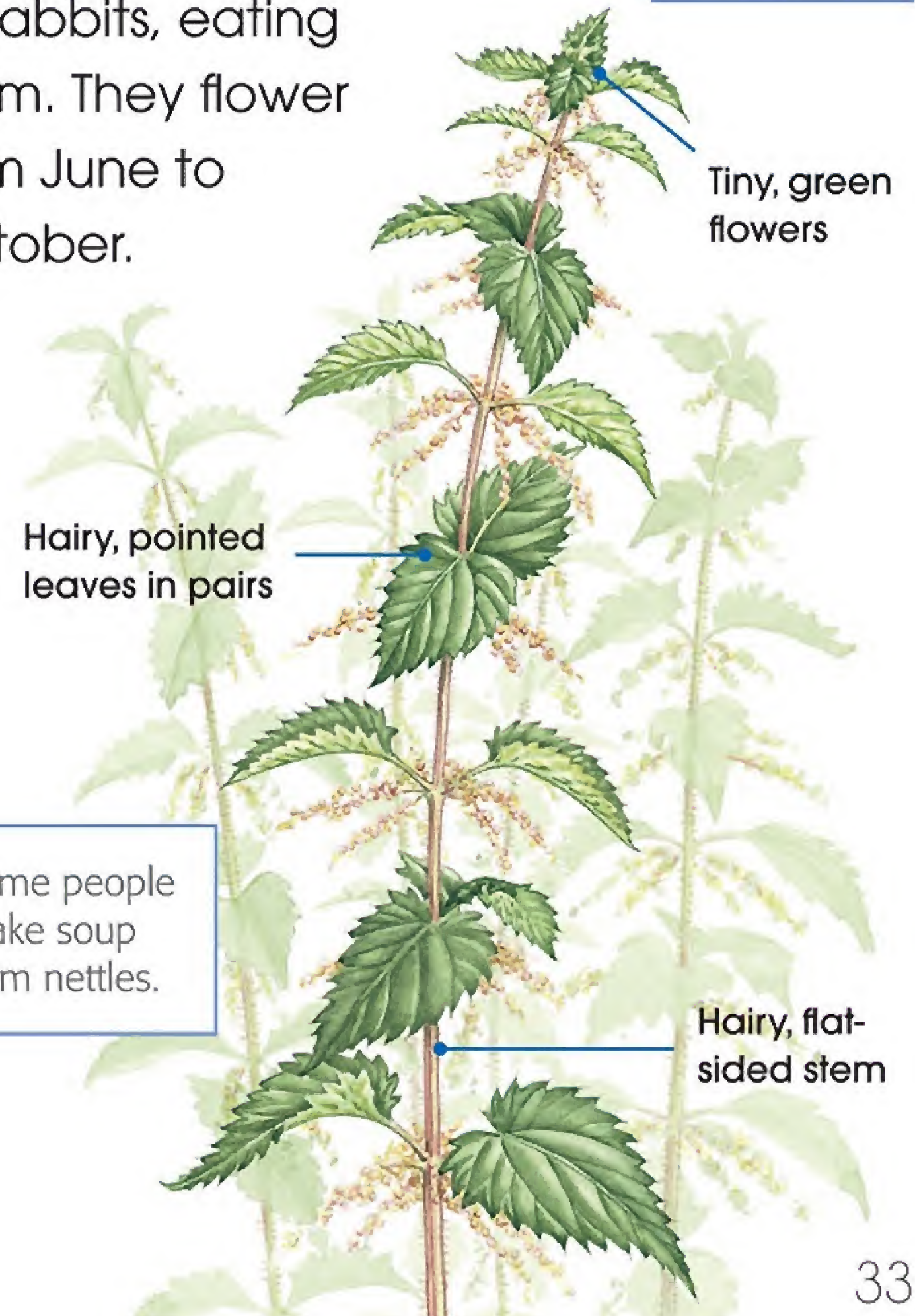
You can also see them in grassy places and on moors and heaths.



Stinging nettle

The stinging nettle is a hairy plant. But watch out – the hairs sting! Nettles use their stings to stop animals, such as rabbits, eating them. They flower from June to October.

Butterflies often lay their eggs on stinging nettles.



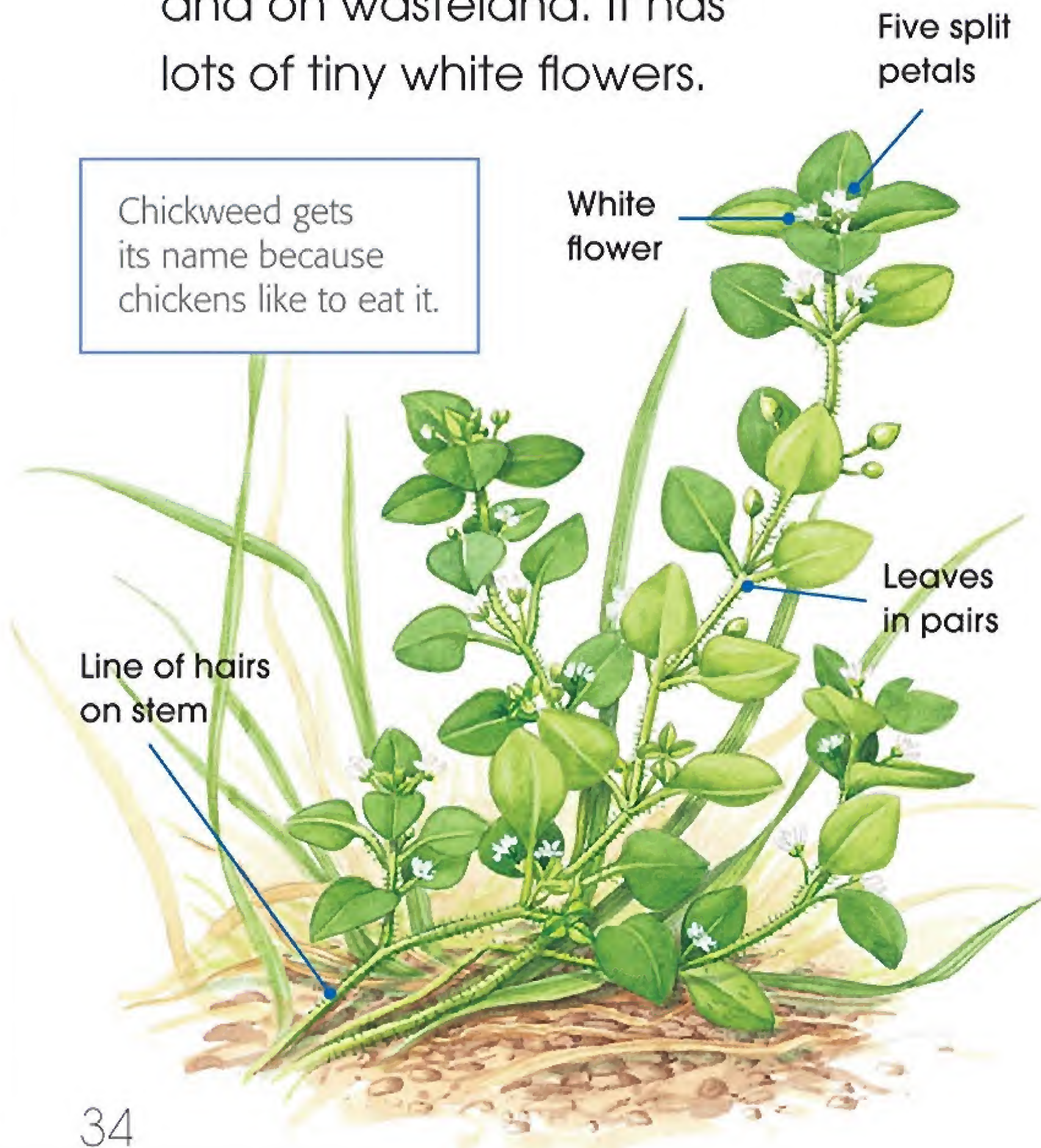
Some people make soup from nettles.



Common chickweed

The common chickweed often spreads over the ground. You can see it in gardens and farm fields, and on wasteland. It has lots of tiny white flowers.

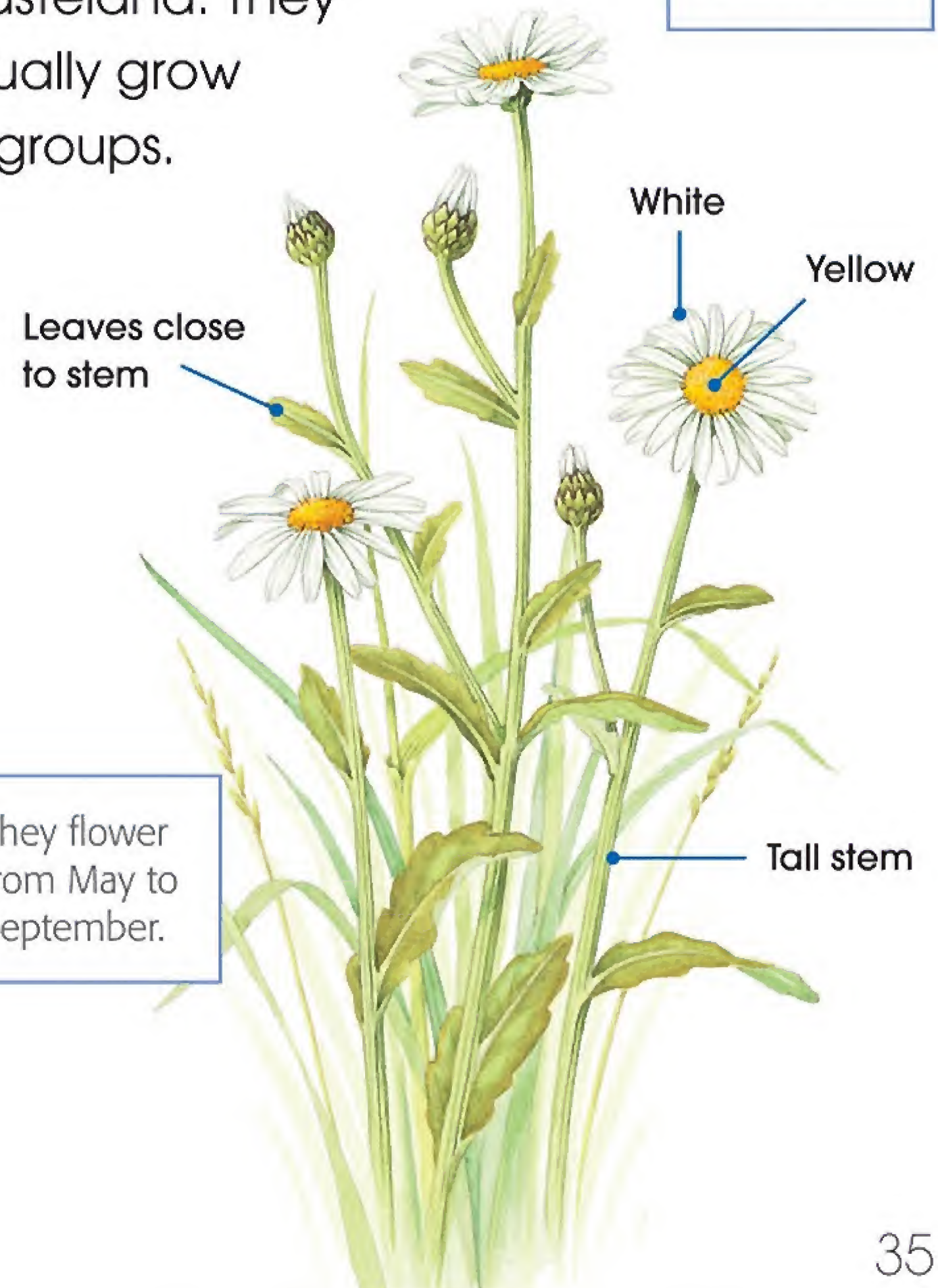
Chickweed gets its name because chickens like to eat it.



Ox-eye daisy

This is a big daisy. It has yellow and white flowers. It grows in grassy places, woods, by roads and on wasteland. They usually grow in groups.

Ox-eye daisies are also called dog daisies or moon daisies.



They flower from May to September.



Great mullein

This plant is very tall and furry. It grows in grassy places, bushy places and wasteland. It has a spike of yellow flowers. The flowers can be seen from June to August.

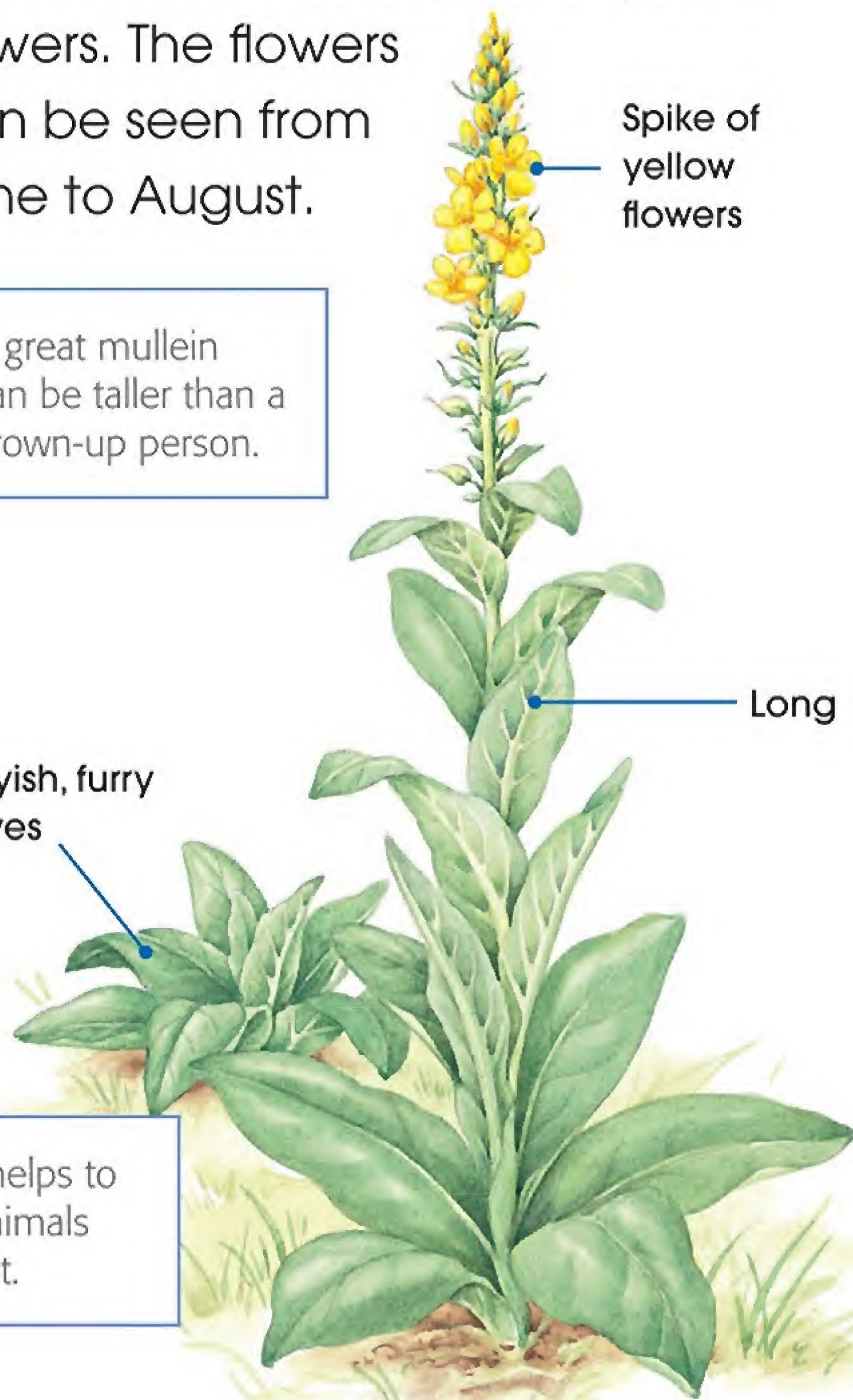
A great mullein can be taller than a grown-up person.

Spike of yellow flowers

Long

Greyish, furry leaves

Its fur helps to stop animals eating it.



Common hogweed

This is a big plant with big leaves and little white flowers. Common hogweed grows by roads, in grassy places and in woods. It flowers from April to November.

Common hogweed flowers have a piggy smell.

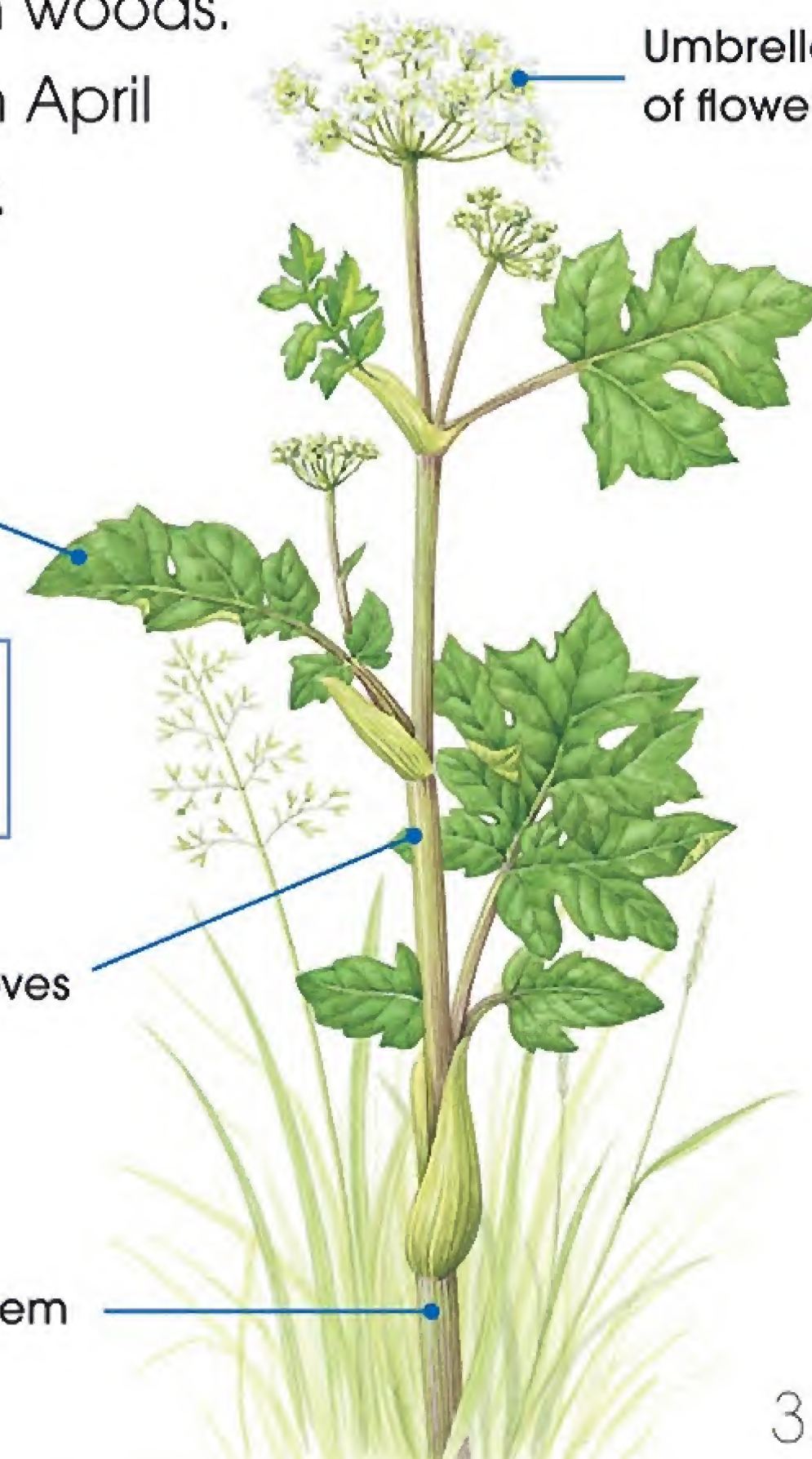
Umbrella of flowers

Big and hairy leaves

Beetles and flies feed on it.

Grooves

Hairy hollow stem





Yellow iris

These big, bright yellow flowers are found by ponds, lakes and rivers.

They grow in marshes too. Look for them from May to August.

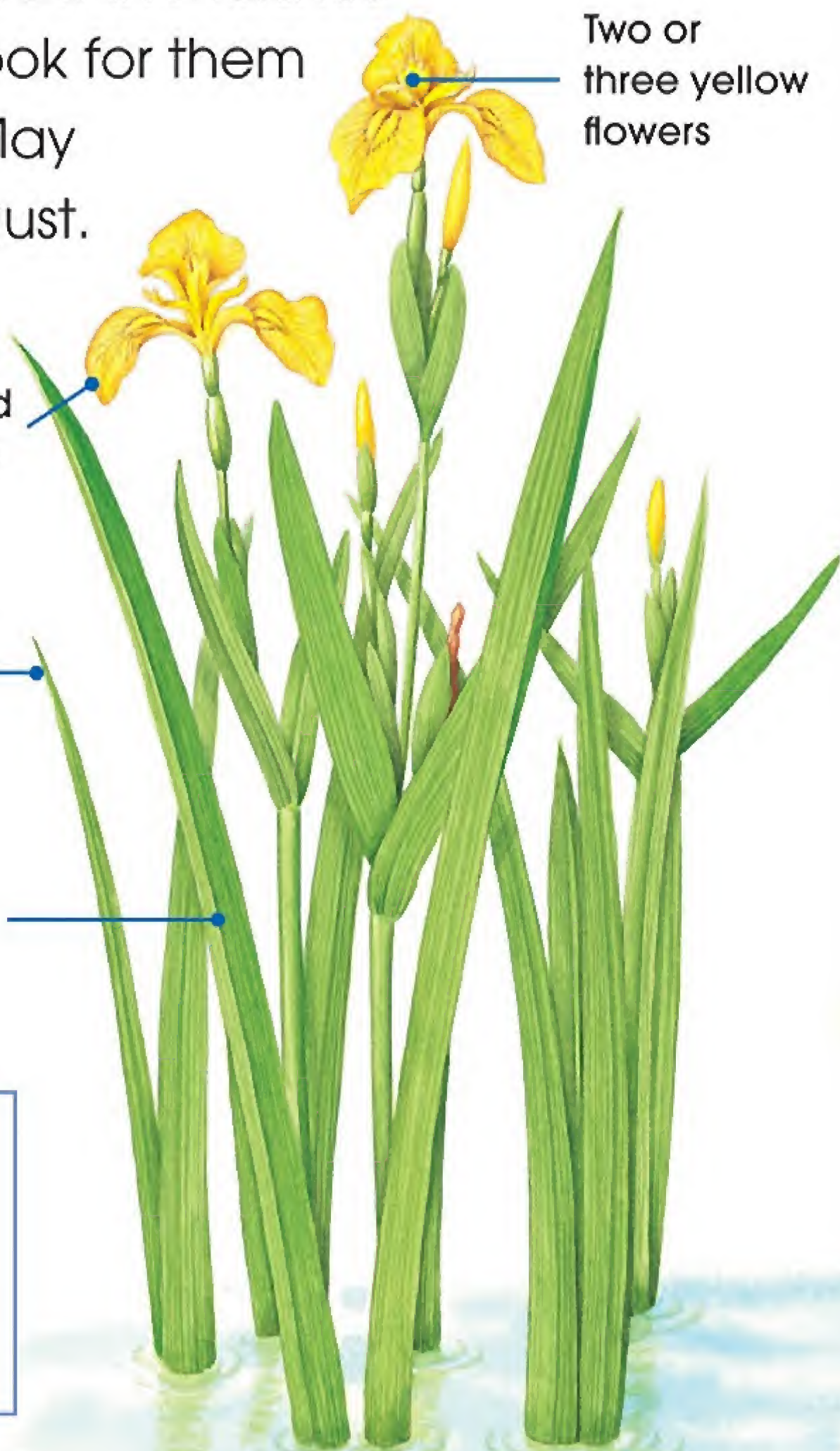
Two or three yellow flowers

Petals fold outwards

Long, pointed leaves

Thicker line down middle of leaf

Another common name for this plant is yellow flag.

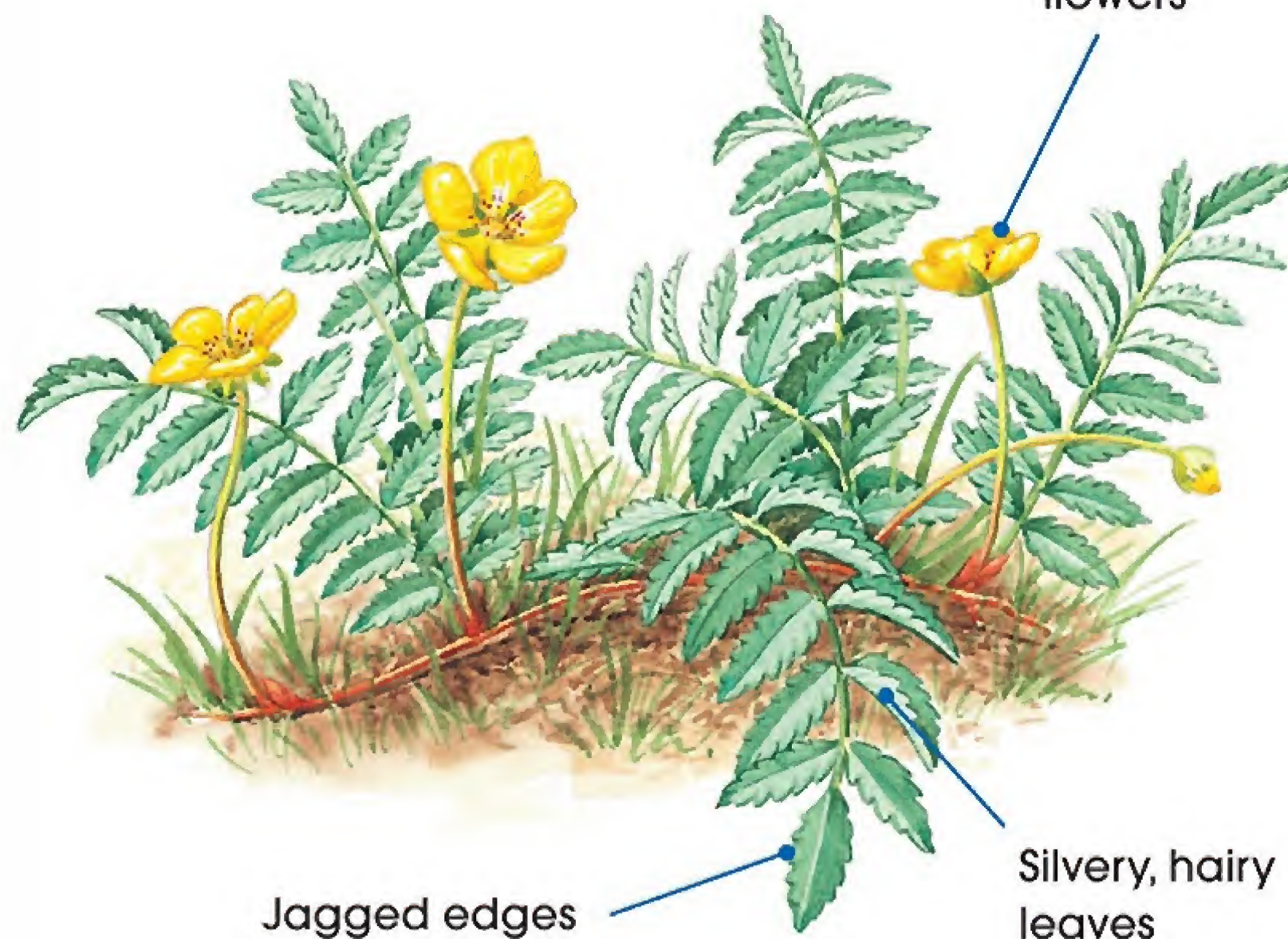


Silverweed

Look on the ground for a plant with leaves that are silvery on the back. It grows on bare soil and in damp grass. You can see its yellow flowers from May to August.

People used to stuff silverweed leaves in their shoes to stop their feet aching.

Yellow flowers

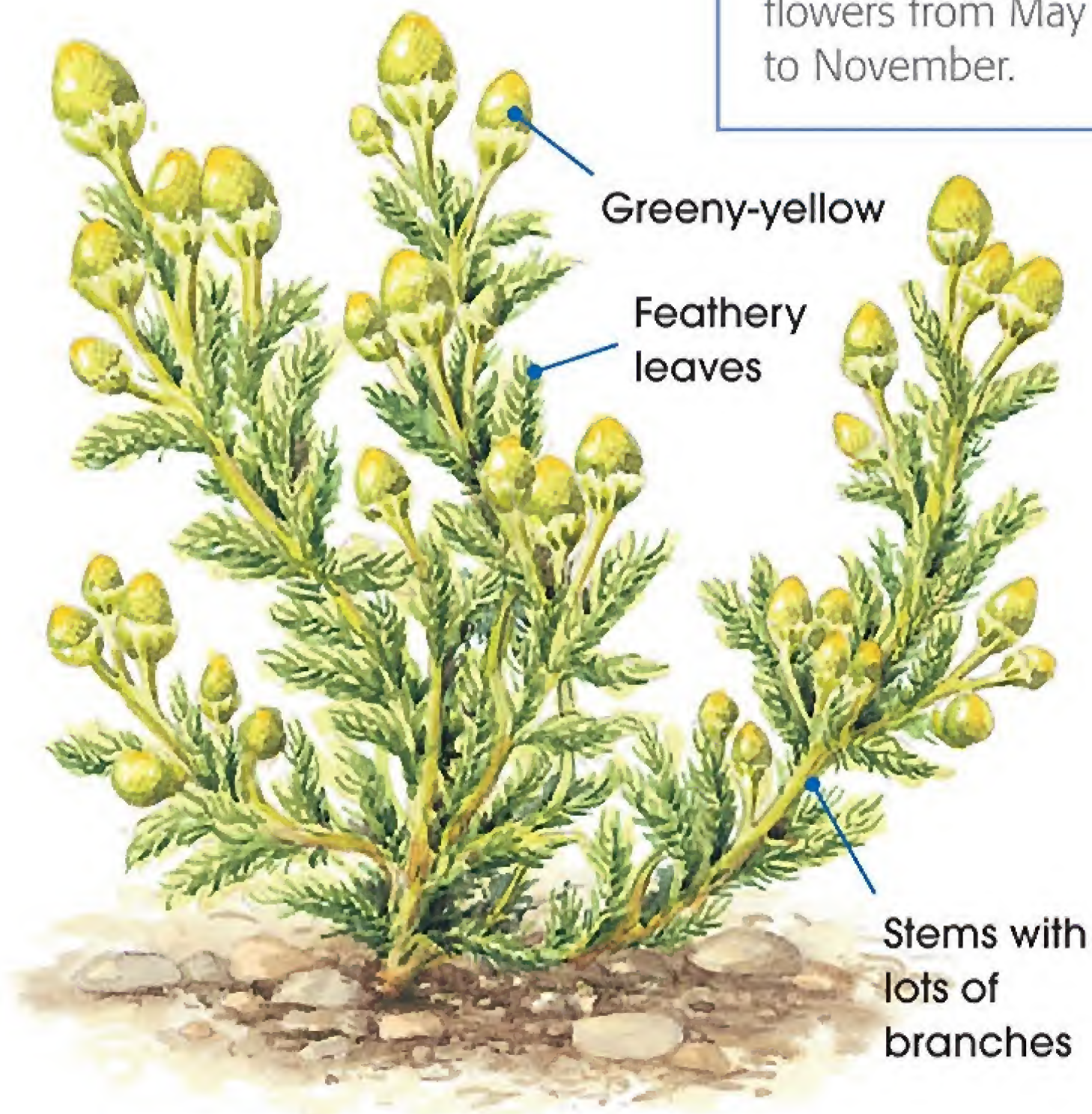




Pineappleweed

Pineappleweed has strange flowers that look like tiny pineapples. It is a small plant. Look for it on paths and wasteland.

Pineappleweed flowers from May to November.



It smells of pineapple too. Crush some leaves and have a sniff.

Useful words

fern a plant that doesn't flower and has feathery leaves

goldfinches small, colourful birds with bright red faces

hollow something that has an empty space inside

moors large, open pieces of land, often covered with heather

nectar the sweet liquid that flowers make to attract insects

stem the stalk of a plant

wasteland land that people once used but that nature has started to take over again

Spotter's guide

How many of these flowers have you seen?



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